HACK/SLASH™

HORROR

AN IMAGE COMICS PRODUCTION CREATED BY TIM SEELEY & STEFANO CASELLI

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HACK/SLASH

DELUXE EDITION

VOLUME 5

A

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MONSTER BAITING

Hack/Slash Vol. 2 #12–18

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LETTERS CRANK!

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A SLICE OF HELL

Hack/Slash & Mercy Sparx #1–2

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COLORS Ben Ellebracht

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THE GOOD SON

Hack/Slash Vol. 2 #16–17

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THE REAL ADVENTURES OF CASSIE HACK

SCRIPT Steve Orlando

ART & COLORS Madison Helland

LETTERS CRANK!

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MONSTER BAITING

HACK/SLASH #12A by **TIM SEELEY**

OVER THE CARIBBEAN SEA.

AFTER MIDNIGHT.

CASSIE HACK

SAMHAIN

CAT CURIO

ISN'T THIS COOL?

THIS IS COOL, RIGHT?

COME ON, CASSIE. YOU HAVE TO ADMIT I'VE REALLY PROVEN MYSELF TO BE AN ASSET TO HACK/SLASH, INC. I GOT US A BOAT PLANE TO SOUTH AMERICA.

A BOAT PLANE!

YOU CONVINCED YOUR PARENTS TO CHARTER YOU A PLANE SO YOU COULD SPEND A WEEK IN A LUXURY SPA.

INSTEAD, WE'RE GOING TO RUN AROUND THE JUNGLE CHASING *GODZILLAS*.

NOT SURE I CAN SAY I'M IMPRESSED.

GODZILLAS?

GODZILLA IS A "GIANT MONSTER" THAT FIRST APPEARED IN THE 1954 TOHO FILM. HE--

WAIT. FORGET IT. WE'RE NOT CHASING MONSTERS. WE'RE GOING TO FIND YOUR *CURE*.

OH, BUT THIS *DOES* INVOLVE GIANT MONSTERS.

I DON'T THINK CASSIE MENTIONED GIANT MONSTERS BEFORE.

THAT'S BECAUSE SHE THINKS IT'S RIDICULOUS.

ANYWAY, I GUESS THE STORY DOES SORT OF INVOLVE *GODZILLA*.

AND *KING KONG*, ACTUALLY.

SEE, IN 1952, ***KING KONG*** WAS RE-RELEASED, AND IT WAS A HUGE HIT.

THAT INSPIRED ***GODZILLA***--WHICH, BY THE WAY, COMES FROM THE WORD ***GOJIRA***, WHICH MEANS ***WHALE-APE***-- AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER MOVIES FROM A WHOLE BUNCH OF COMPANIES LOOKING TO CASH IN.

ONE OF THOSE COMPANIES WAS ***MONSTER BAIT STUDIOS***, STARTED BY ***ROMAN CARPENTER*** IN 1956.

HE HIRED HIS TWO SONS, ***RUDY*** AND ***REYNOLD***, TO HELP CREATE THE FILMS.

RUDY WOULD DIRECT AND REYNOLD WOULD HANDLE ALL THE SPECIAL EFFECTS AND TECHNICAL STUFF.

THEY SHOT ALL OF THEIR MOVIES IN THE SAME PLACE, WITH THE SAME CAST.

DOROTHY KANEFSKY, ***WANDA BELANGER***--THEY WERE THE STARLETS. ***BUCK KEMP*** WAS ALWAYS THE STAR.

THAT CAST GOT TO BE KNOWN AS "***THE MONSTER BAITERS.***"

THEY MADE FORTY MOVIES OVER FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING SUCH CLASSICS AS...

...THE ***GORILLACONDA*** SERIES, ***THEY WHAT BE PSYCHOSAURS***, ***THE BEAST FROM GROUND ZERO***, AND ***DR. INSOMNIOUS***.

THEY WHAT BE PSYCHOSAURS

fantasy WORLD

THE BEAST FROM GROUND ZERO

GORILLACONDA

DR. INSOMNIOUS

NONE OF THE MOVIES THEY MADE WERE BIG BOX OFFICE HITS--

BECAUSE THEY'RE ***AWFUL, AWFUL*** MOVIES.

--BUT THEY KEPT CHURNING THEM OUT ANYWAY.

SEE, THIS IS WHERE IT GETS INTERESTING.

FOR YEARS THERE WERE RUMORS THAT MONSTER BAIT STUDIOS WAS JUST A FRONT.

BUT NO ONE KNEW FOR WHAT.

SOME SAY THAT ROMAN CARPENTER HAD SECRETLY DEFECTED TO GERMANY AFTER WORLD WAR ONE TO HELP THE NAZIS DEVELOP UNKILLABLE SOLDIERS.

THAT'S WHERE THE SCUTTLEBUTT NORMALLY STOPS.

BUT I'M CAT CURIO, INTREPID DETECTIVE.

FROM WHAT I COULD DIG UP, IT'S NOT JUST RUMOR.

THE SOLDIERS THEY USED WERE CULLED FROM THE RANKS OF GERMANY'S WORST SERIAL KILLERS, OR ***DAS HAUMESSER.***

ENGLISH-TO-GERMAN TRANSLATION: SLASHERS.

OBVIOUSLY, THE PROJECT WASN'T A SUCCESS. MAYBE THE WAR ENDED BEFORE IT CAME TO FRUITION.

AFTER THE WAR, CARPENTER SENIOR WAS OVERWHELMED WITH GUILT FOR WHAT HE'D HELPED CREATE, SO HE ESCAPED TO AN "UNKNOWN DESTINATION" AND SET UP THE STUDIO.

WHERE HE USED THE FILMS TO FINANCE HIS TRUE GOAL: UNDOING THE DAMAGE HE'D DONE.

IN OTHER WORDS, TO FIND A ***CURE*** FOR SLASHERS.

TELL HIM HOW YOU FOUND THE "***UNKNOWN LOCATION.***"

OH, EASY. I WATCHED ALL FORTY FILMS FIFTEEN TIMES EACH AND LISTED ALL THE PLANTS THAT APPEAR IN THE BACKGROUND.

FROM THAT LIST I CAME UP WITH THE ONLY KNOWN PLACE WHERE THOSE SPECIES ALL GROW TOGETHER.

DOYLE VALLEY. LOCATED WITHIN NORTHWESTERN GUYANA'S RAIN FOREST, IT'S ONE OF THE LEAST-EXPLORED REGIONS ON EARTH, WITH EIGHTY PERCENT OF IT STILL COVERED IN--

FIFTEEN TIMES EACH?

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID.

AND THESE ARE *AWFUL, AWFUL* MOVIES.

WHAT'S SO STRANGE ABOUT MULTIPLE VIEWINGS?

I'VE SEEN *POUND PUPPIES* AND *THE LEGEND OF BIG PAW* NINETEEN TIMES...

...AND THAT WAS FOR PLEASURE, NOT BUSINESS.

HUNF

I KNOW THAT FACE.

YOU HEAR VOICES THROUGH THE GROUND: PEOPLE.

VISITORS COME.

HUFF

THEN *HE* WILL KNOW, TOO. TAKE ME UP.

FIND THEM BEFORE HE DOES, OLD FRIEND.

AND THEN THIS, LIKE, BIG GREEN SPIDER LEG GRABS HER, BUT IT TOTALLY LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE GLUED HAIR TO A TELEPHONE POLE, RIGHT?

THE WORST SORT OF CHEESY SPECIAL EFFECT.

AND THEN *BUCK KEMP* JUMPS IN, BUT, I MEAN, NO MAN HAS EVER BEEN MORE WOODEN. AND HE'S, LIKE, "FACE. ME. BUG!"

=AHEM= IF WE FOLLOW THIS STREAM, THAT SHOULD TAKE US TO THE CUYUNI RIVER, WHICH WILL LEAD US TO DOYLE VALLEY.

LEMME WATER SOME PLANTS BEFORE WE TAKE OFF AGAIN.

ALL THIS TALK OF BAD MOVIES IS MAKING ME HAVE TO PEE.

BE BACK IN A SECOND.

B.M.J. TEARJERKER BRAND MACE...

CHECK.

SMITH AND WESSON .22...

CHE--

MISS CURIO.

GAAHH!!

MACE

PSSSSh

I KNOW OUR PAST HAS CAUSED YOU TO FEAR AND MISTRUST ME.

GAK!

=COFF=

=COFF=

THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE DISCOVERED A POSSIBLE CURE, AND HELPED ME TO COME HERE, LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT, DESPITE IT ALL...

...YOU *DO* BELIEVE THAT I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY EARLIER ACTIONS.

I THANK YOU.

GREATLY.

HRM.

=COFF=

NO PROBLEM.

"YES, VLAD. I WASH MY HANDS EACH AND EVERY TIME I GO TO THE BATHROOM."

EVEN IN THE JUNGLE.

GOT THAT FROM CLEAN-FREAK MOM, I GUESS.

GODDAMN IT, VLAD. I WISH YOU WERE HERE.

INSTEAD, YOU'RE IN MICHIGAN, IN SO MUCH PAIN YOU CAN BARELY MOVE.

THE F--?!

LUUUH.

SPPSSSH

ACK!

HNNNGGGH.

LUUUGHHHB.

FUUUUUUCK...

SPLLBT

...YOU!!

WHOA, YOU REALLY HAD TO GO.

GET READY, CAT.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE PART OF HACK/SLASH, INC....

LUUUHH.

GUUURRRRGL.

...YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL SOME DEAD SHIT.

BLLLUGHH.

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN.

NNNGH.

GLLUGH.

AHHH!!

SHUNK

I'VE GOT YOU-- HUNH!

PKOW

OH JEEPERS. NOW I *OWE* YOU.

GLUUUH.

SPPPLLLSH

THEY'RE REALLY SOFT.

ONE GOOD HIT DOES 'EM IN.

PLAP

HUNH.

THE BOMB QUEEN STOLE... SOME OF MY BLOOD.

WITHOUT IT, I AM WEAKER... BUT MY MIND KNOWS LESS DARKNESS.

THIS NEWFOUND WEAKNESS CHANGES NOTHING.

I HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT CASSIE WITH MY BODY.

GHA!

I EXTEND THE SAME PROMISE TO YOU, CAT CURIO.

MUH.

KWOK

THERE!

WE CAN CUT THE VINES ONCE WE'RE ACROSS!

CASSIE, CAN YOU HOLD ON TO ME?

YUUH.

THUH...THEY STU-OPPED.

ANYONE ELSE NOTICE HOW STICKY THIS VINE IS?

LIKE, SUPERGLUE STICKY?

THAT...

...IS NO CHEESY SPECIAL EFFECT.

OHMYGOSH OHMYGOSHOHMYBEAST FROMGROUNDZERO OHMYGOSH.

I CAN'T PULL MYSELF FREE!

I'LL... FUH...I CAN GED...

GUH.

GAAASSIEEEE!!

UNGH!

GRRrOOOoAAAH!

RROOOAA!
WHUH!
WHUH!
SHRRCH
SHREEE!!
RRRRAAAAA!
CHOK

SHREEEE!

GORILLACONDA.

WE'VE GOT *GORILLACONDA!*

AHHHH!!

CUT IT NOW, WHEN WE'RE LESS *HIGH UP!*

ALMOST... GOT IT.

SNK

WHUH... WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

ploosh

CASSIE!
CAT AND I ARE STILL STUCK TO THE WEB!
WE CAN'T SWIM.
UGH.
THE WATER'S WASHING OFF THE GUTS, COUNTERACTING THEM...
...I THINK I CAN SWIM US OUT OF HERE.
UNH!
=COFF=
I WILL NOT LET YOU DROWN!
PWEE.
YOU TWO, RUN TO THE BEND IN CASE THEY COME UP THERE.
YOU, FOLLOW ME!
CHK CHK.
URGK.

GLLLBBB!

AH! I THINK I'M DROWNING SAMHAIN!

CAN HE DROWN?

IT'S ONLY A LITTLE FARTHER!

HOLD ON!

I THINK I'VE GOT IT.

FUCK!!

IT'S TOO SLICK!

NO...

...I HAVE YOU.

YOU'RE SAFE.

BUT SAM--!

THE PSYCHOSAURS HAVE HIM.

GORILLACONDA AND THE BEAST WILL KEEP EACH OTHER BUSY.

WELCOME TO DOYLE VALLEY.

LATER.

MONSTER BAIT STUDIOS.

MEDICAL LAB.

HOW IS SHE?

OH. HI, DOCTOR CARPENTER.

PLEASE, CALL ME REYNOLD.

I'VE SPENT FAR TOO MANY YEARS LIVING LIKE A SAVAGE TO ACCEPT SUCH FORMALITY.

THE BEAST FILLS HIS VICTIMS WITH A FLUID THAT BOTH DISSOLVES THEIR ORGANS AND FORCES THEM TO RESPOND TO HIS TELEPATHIC DESIRES.

THEY PROVIDE HIM WITH MORE PREY UNTIL HE TIRES OF THEM AND SUCKS OUT THEIR INSIDES.

GROSS.

YES. QUITE. YOUR FRIEND WILL RECOVER FULLY WITH THE HELP OF THIS ANTI-VENOM, ALONG WITH A LITTLE REST.

WELL, HE VERY NEARLY DROWNED. IT'S HARD TO SAY--

WHAT ABOUT HIM?

COME ON, DOC.

SHE KNOWS WHAT HE IS JUST AS WELL AS YOU OR I DO.

SHE AIN'T ASKING IF HE'LL GET BETTER.

HE *ALWAYS* GETS BETTER.

JUST LIKE ME.

SHE BROUGHT HIM HERE, 'CAUSE SHE KNOWS ABOUT THE CURE.

SHE WANTS TO KNOW IF IT WORKS.

WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, HONEY...

...BACK IN MY HOMETOWN, I WAS THE BOOGEYMAN. KILLED A BUNCH A' WAITRESSES.

AFTER THEY PUT ME DOWN FOR WHAT I DONE, I COME BACK AN' KILLED SOME MORE.

BUT THEN I MET THE DOC. I WENT FROM PLAYING THE VILLAIN TO PLAYING THE HERO.

NAME'S ***BUCK KEMP.*** MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN MY WORK.

TO BE CONTINUED...

MONSTER BAIT FILM STUDIOS.

DOYLE VALLEY. GUYANA. SOUTH AMERICA.

CAT CURIO. INTREPID DETECTIVE.

A BABY. SO KEEEY-UTE!

CHRRRT.

PWEET!

HELLO, CATHERINE.

OH. HELLO, REYNOLD. THANKS FOR TAKING US IN LAST NIGHT, AND FOR ALL THE HELP.

OUR PLEASURE. WE EXIST TO HELP PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS. THE PROCESS IS NEARLY READY, IF YOU WISH TO WATCH.

HAVE YOU BEEN ENJOYING OUR PREHISTORIC FRIENDS?

YEAH, THEY'RE...I MEAN, WOW, DINOSAURS, RIGHT? RAPTORS WERE ALWAYS MY FAVORITE.

THOUGH CLOSE TO THE TOP OF THE LIST WERE ALSO PROTOCERATOPS.

AND BRONTOSAURUS, WHICH I UNDERSTAND HAS BEEN DISCOVERED TO HAVE NEVER EXISTED.

I GUESS I CAN PUT APATOSAURUS IN ITS PLACE, AND--

WUUHN.

WHOA!

I GOTCHA.

ARE YOU OKAY?

WUH. YES, YES.

THE HEAT IS NEARLY UNBEARABLE THIS TIME OF YEAR.

AND I'M NOT AS YOUNG AS I ONCE WAS.

HERE...

...LET ME HELP YOU UP.

WE'LL GO GET YOU SOME WATER.

SO, DID I TELL YOU WHAT A HUGE FAN OF YOUR TEAM'S MOVIES I AM?

REALLY?

I THINK *DR. INSOMNIOUS AND THE THING THAT WOULD NOT SLEEP* IS A CLASSIC!

YOU BEEN AWFUL QUIET, MS. HACK.

YOU FEELIN' ALL RIGHT?

I CAN GIVE YA ANOTHER DOSE O' BEAST ANTI-TOXIN.

NO. I'M FINE.

I GUESS YOU CAN SEE A LOT OF CRAZY STUFF AND STILL BE PRETTY SHELL-SHOCKED WHEN YOU FIND OUT THAT GORILLACONDA ISN'T AN ACTOR IN A SNAKE-MONKEY SUIT.

HA. DIDN'T THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THAT.

GUESS I'M PRETTY USED TO IT, LIVIN' AMONG ALL THIS CRAZINESS FOR, WHAT, SIXTY YEARS NOW?

I LOOK PRETTY GOOD FOR NINETY-FOUR YEARS OLD, WOULDN'T YA SAY?

WHY DID YOU ALL DISAPPEAR LIKE THAT?

ALL THESE AMAZING CREATURES AND A CURE FOR THE WORST KIND OF EVIL... AND YOU HIDE OUT HERE?

WELL, SEE, IT'S NOT EXACTLY LIKE THAT.

THE MONSTERS? THEY WERE JUST LAB EXPERIMENTS.

THE PRODUCTS OF TESTS ON GENES AND DNA AND WHATNOT THAT THE NAZIS DECIDED WERE TOO IMPRACTICAL FOR MASS MANUFACTURIN'.

IT WAS THE PEOPLE LIKE ME, AND SAMHAIN HERE, THAT THEY REALLY WANTED.

CARPENTER SENIOR--WELL, WHEN HE ABSCONDED, HE FIGURED HE COULD USE THEM BIG CRITTERS TO HELP FUND THE OPERATION.

THING IS, AS SOON AS HE STARTED MESSIN' AROUND WITH A CURE FOR THE "SLASHERS," HE STARTED GETTIN' THE ATTENTION OF SOME KIND OF CULT.

THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.

THAT'S THE ONES.

THEY SENT THEIR ASSASSINS TO STOP HIM.

TOOK OUT THE OLD MAN, WANDA, DOROTHY, AND RUDY, TOO.

LEFT JUST ME AND REYNOLD, AND A BUNCH O' REAL MOVIE MONSTERS THAT WOULD EAT THEIR WAY ACROSS THE WORLD IF LEFT TO THEMSELVES.

SO HERE WE STAYED.

WE KEEP AN EYE ON THE VALLEY, MAKIN' SURE THE MONSTERS DON'T GET OUT AND AS FEW PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE GET IN, UNLESS THEY NEED THE CURE.

REYNOLD--WELL, HE KEEPS GETTIN' OLDER, BUT I'M STUCK AT THE AGE I ORIGINALLY "DIED" AT, MEANIN' SOONER OR LATER, IT'LL JUST BE ME AND MY ETERNALLY HANDSOME MUG.

SO, THE PROCESS... IT'LL TAKE OUT THE BAD STUFF?

YEP. ONCE THE DOC DONE ME, MY MIND WAS CLEAR AS DAY. CLEANER THOUGHTS THAN A PRIEST ON SUNDAY.

DOWNSIDE, O' COURSE, IS THAT YOU CAN'T HEAL UP LIKE YA USED TO, BUT IT'S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR BEIN' ABLE TO TALK TO A WOMAN WITHOUT WANTIN' TO CUT HER SPLEEN OUT, RIGHT?

MR. KEMP... IF I COULD TALK TO CASSIE ALONE.

OH SURE, MAN. DOC CARPENTER OUGHTA BE HERE IN A JIFF.

DO YOU... SHOULD I GO THROUGH WITH THIS?

SAM...

I'M ALREADY WEAKER BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH BOMB QUEEN.

THERE'S LESS OF THE DARK BLOOD RUNNING THROUGH MY VEINS.

WITH IT ALL GONE, I'LL JUST BE A MAN.

I'LL BLEED.

I'LL HURT.

I'LL BE WHOEVER I WAS BEFORE ALL THIS.

WHAT IF THAT MAN IS NO BETTER THAN THE SLASHERS YOU DESTROY?

FROM THE MOMENT I MET YOU, AND WHO KNOWS HOW MANY YEARS BEFORE THAT, YOU'VE FOUGHT AGAINST THIS.

NONE OF THE OTHER KILLERS I'VE MET HAVE TRIED TO RESIST.

THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING SO ***GOOD*** IN YOU, SO FUCKING ***PURE***, THAT IT CAN'T BE CORRUPTED.

THEN IF IT WORKS, IF WE CAN KNOW BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT THIS IS AN AFFLICTION AND CAN BE FIXED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF YOU-- CASSANDRA HACK, THE SLASHER KILLER?

I'LL TAKE CARE OF VLAD.

I'LL JOIN THE REST OF THE WORLD.

GET A JOB, I GUESS.

I'LL BE CASSIE HACK...

...THE GIRL WHO KILLED HER MOM, WHEN SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CURE HER.

NO. YOU'LL BE CASSIE HACK, A WOMAN WHOSE STRENGTH AND BEAUTY...

...WAS ENOUGH TO SAVE A MAN'S SOUL.

SHALL WE BEGIN?

EVERYTHING IS READY, DOC.

GOOD. IT'S NOT A QUICK PROCESS, AND I'D HATE TO MISS DINNER.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS, I HOPE THAT YOUR LONG, DANGEROUS JOURNEY...

...WILL PROVIDE THIS MAN WITH THE PEACE HE DESERVES.

BUCK, THROW THE SWITCH, PLEASE.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER.

WOW.

I FEEL LIKE I JUST WATCHED SOMEONE GIVE BIRTH.

IN A WAY YOU DID, HONEY. THIS WAS A GENUINE *REBIRTH*.

AND TO THINK ALL IT TOOK WAS REMOVIN' A LITTLE BIT O' CONCENTRATED EVIL.

=OOF=

SORRY! I FORGET THAT THE PROCESS TAKES A BIT OUTTA A MAN.

YA'LL GET SOME REST. WE'LL HAVE US A NICE DINNER CELEBRATION TONIGHT.

I'M A BIT OF A HUNTER, SO I HOPE YA'LL LIKE WILD GAME.

CATHERINE... *CAT*.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.

THESE TWO THINGS ONCE DEFINED ME. WITHOUT THEM, I FELT LOST.

WITH THEM, I CAUSED NOTHING BUT FEAR AND DEATH.

I KNOW THAT THIS MASK CAUSES YOU GREAT FEAR. AND I KNOW THAT THIS KNIFE TOOK YEARS OF YOUR LIFE.

I WANT YOU TO TAKE THEM BOTH.

DESTROY THEM.

IT WILL GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE TO KNOW THEY CAN NEVER BE PART OF ME AGAIN.

AND, JUST PERHAPS, IT WILL GIVE YOU CLOSURE TO KNOW THAT THESE SYMBOLS OF THE MONSTER WHO ONCE HAUNTED YOU HAVE BEEN VANQUISHED BY YOUR OWN HANDS.

OH.

UH... OKAY.

I WILL.

HEY, CASSIE, CAN I BORROW THE SHIRT YOU WERE WEARING YESTERDAY?

WHY?

I WANTED TO RUN SOME TESTS ON THE STUFF THAT CAME OUT OF THAT SPIDER-ZOMBIE YOU FOUGHT.

YOU KNOW, NOTHING SPECIAL. JUST CURIOUS.

IT'S IN OUR ROOM, ON THE CHAIR.

CURIOUS LIKE A CAT. YOU KNOW ME. *HA.*

PEOPLE USED TO SAY TO ME: "DID YOU CHOOSE 'CURIO' AS A SURNAME, BECAUSE THAT'S AN AWFULLY BIG COINCIDENCE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?"

AND I'D SAY: "WHY, NO. 'CURIO' IS A VERY OLD AND RESPECTED FAMILY N--"

OH.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

GOOD.

NO MORE HATE?

NO MORE URGE TO KILL?

NO.

QUITE THE OPPOSITE.

ARE YOU SURE?

THERE ARE STILL ALL THOSE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT MY PAST.

ALL I EVER DO IS THINK ON THE PAST. WHERE'S THAT GOTTEN ME?

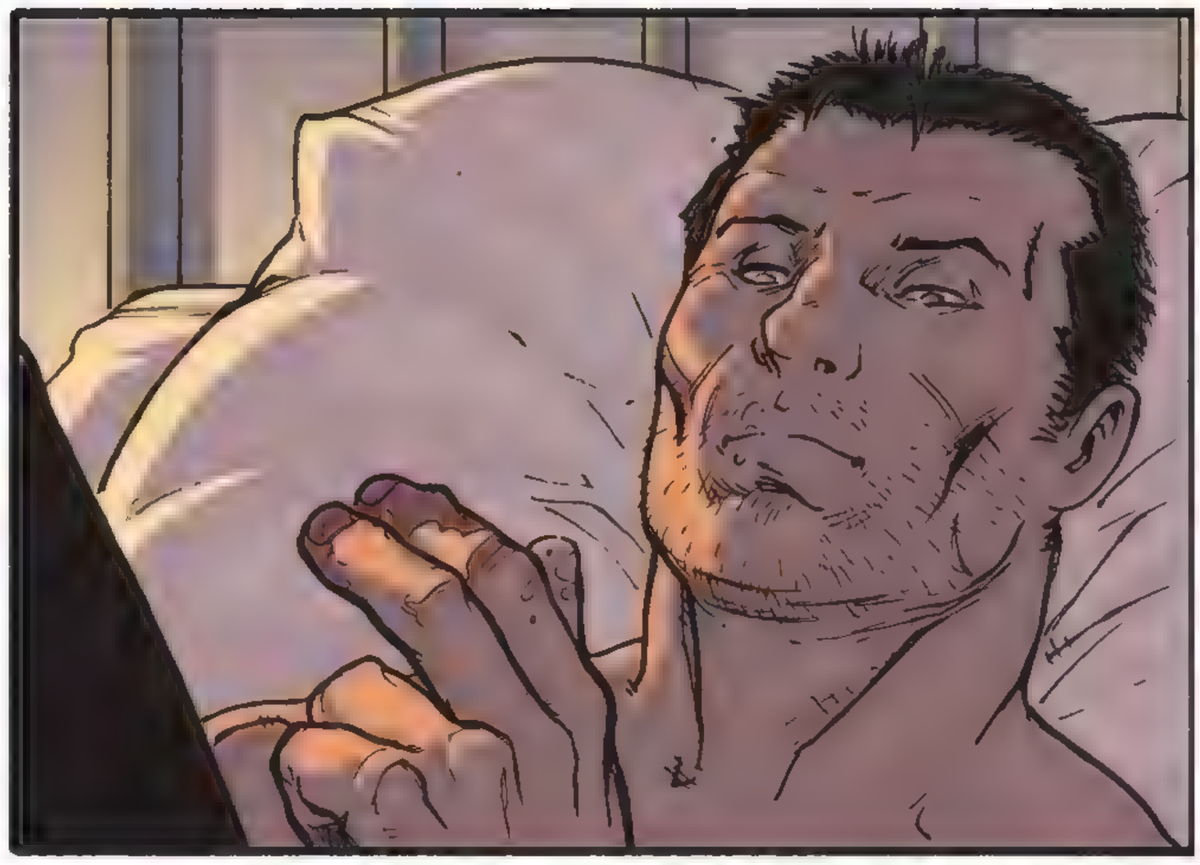
FOR ONCE, I JUST WANT TO DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT.

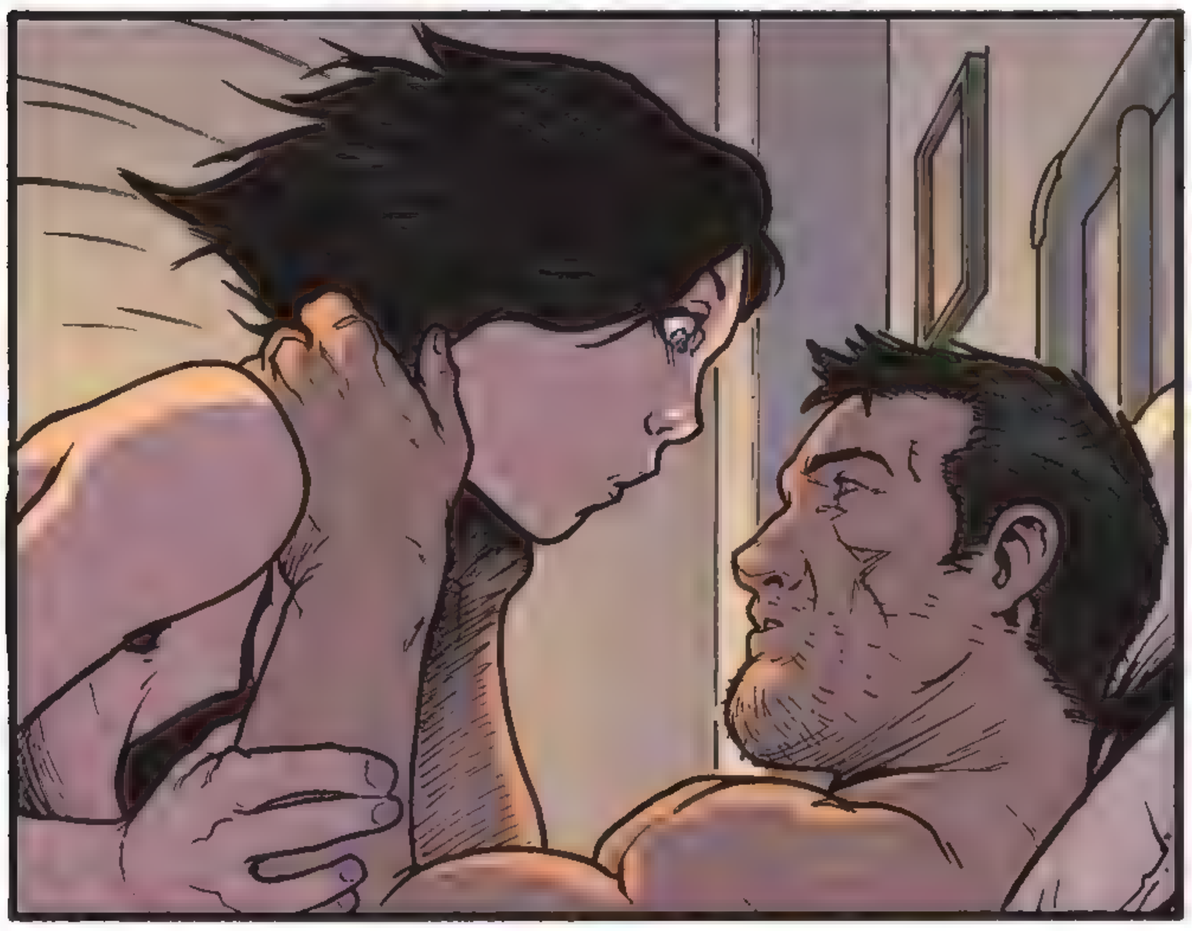
YOU FEEL ALIVE.

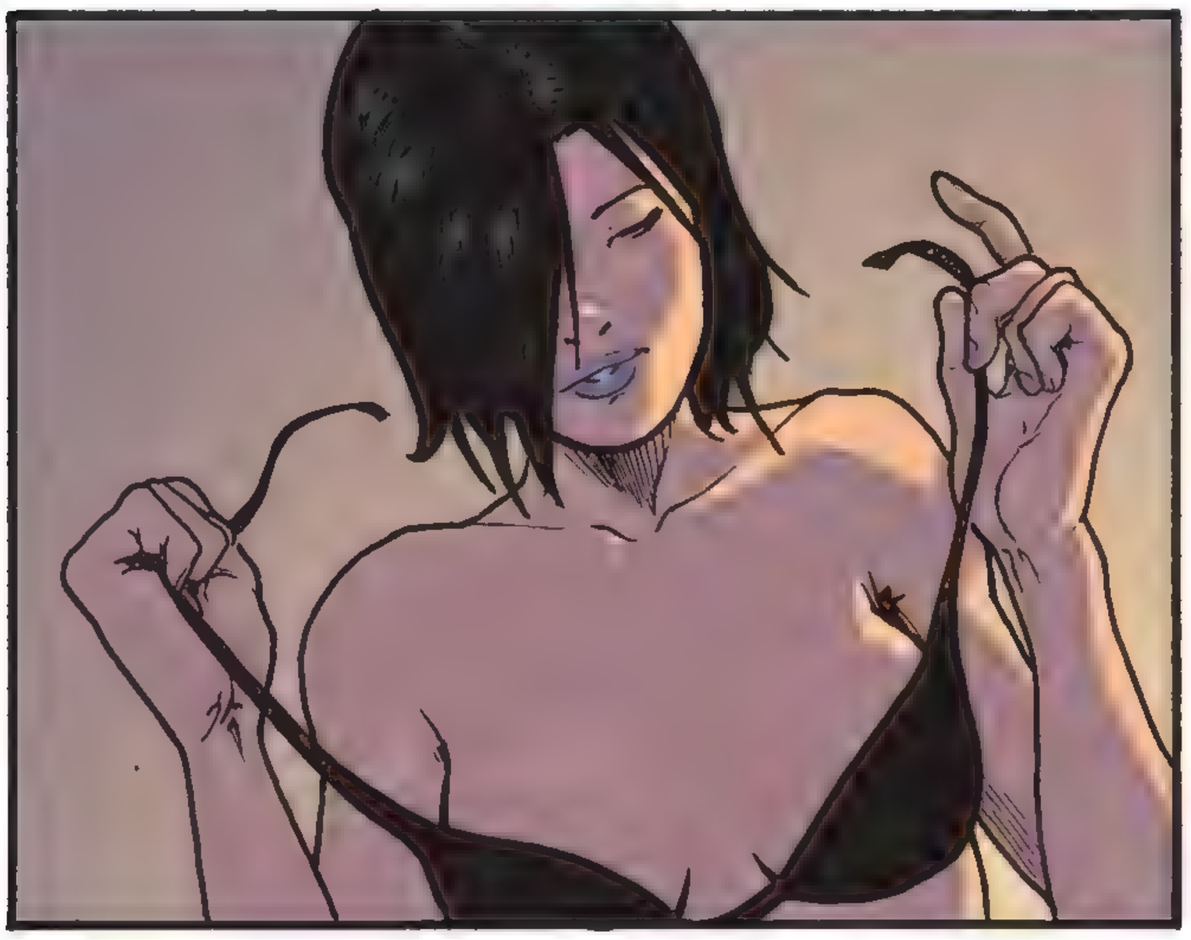
SHARE IT WITH ME.

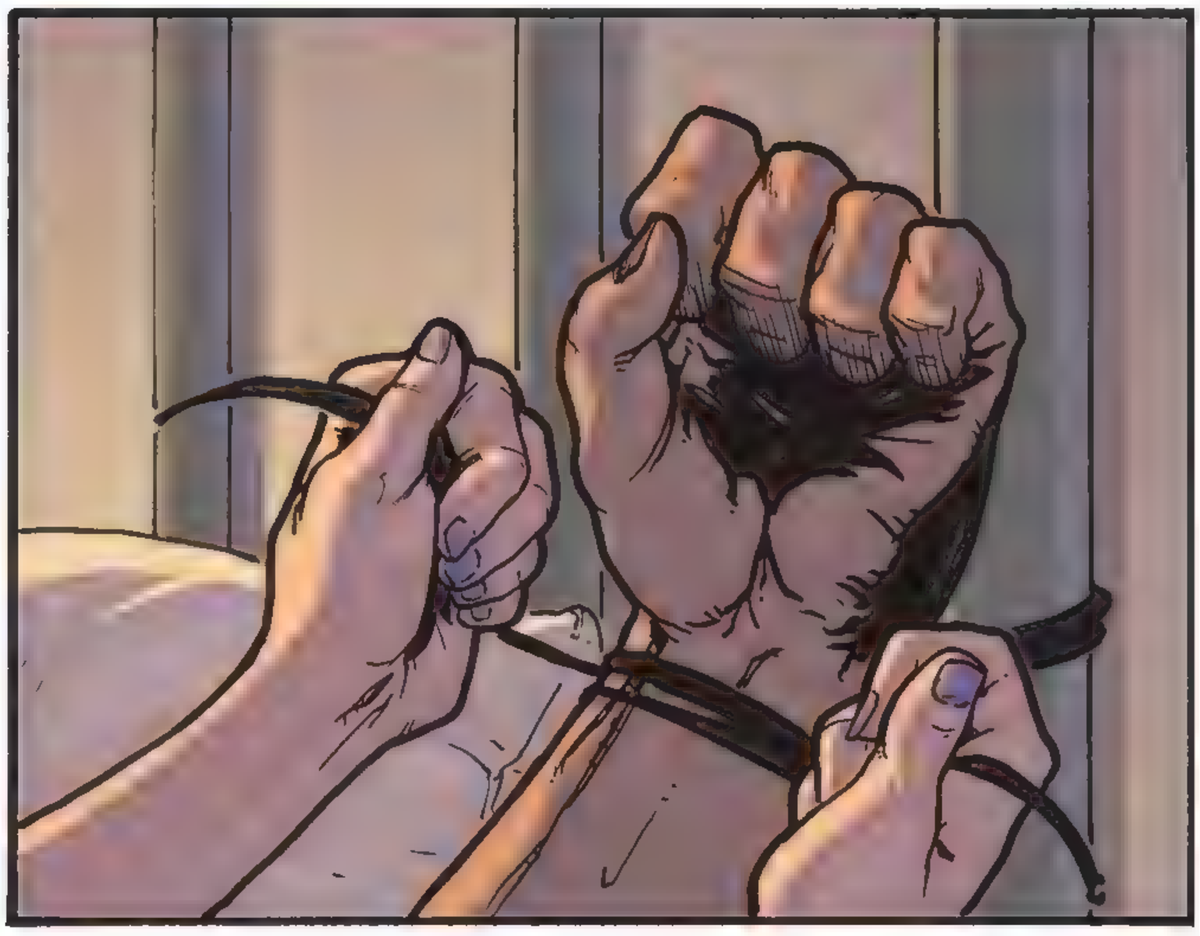
MMF!

SORRY!









THOUGH THE SAMPLE IS HIGHLY DEGRADED BY TIME AND RIVER WATER, THE STRUCTURE OF THE SPIDER'S VENOM IS VERY DISTINCT, CONTAINING PEPTIDE TOXINS USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH POISONOUS SNAKES.

NOW, I WILL TEST THE SAMPLE GATHERED FROM-- WELL, THE BIG ZITTY THING ON REYNOLD CARPENTER'S HEAD.

IF MY THEORY HOLDS, BOTH WILL CONTAIN THE SAME PEPTIDES, REVEALING THAT...

UH...

=SIGH= COME ON, CAT. FOCUS.

GET THEM OUT OF YOUR THOUGHTS.

THEY'RE JUST A PIECE OF METAL AND A SCRAP OF CLOTH.

THE BOOGEYMAN IS GONE AND DEAD, AND WE'RE ALL HAPPY FRIENDS.

THE PROBLEM NOW IS--

WAIT. A REFLECTION OF...EYES?

HELLO?

EVIDENTLY, MY RESEARCH INTO THE VENOM SAMPLES HAS ROUSED SUSPICIONS ENOUGH THAT THEY'VE DISPATCHED A SPY TO DISCOVER WHAT I HAVE UNCOVERED.

PAP

PAP

PAP

WELL, MR. SPY.

IF I TIME THIS JUST RIGHT, THE TABLES WILL BE TURNED.

ONE... TWO...

...THREE!

HNGF!

FWUMMB

PWEEET!

OOOO. A SUPER KEEEY-UTE SPY.

PWEEEET!!

GET BACK HERE, YOU ADORABLE LITTLE INFILTRATOR!

PWEEEET!!

WHAT ARE YOU ALL UP TO?

BECAUSE I THINK THERE'S A LOT MORE GOING ON HERE THAN ANYONE SUSPECTS!

OH.

TINK

CLEVER GIRL.

HOT BLOOD WET MEAT.

RUN RUN RUN CHASE.

CLEVER SMART CHALLENGE HUNT.

RUN. RUN SO THAT WE WILL HUNT.

AHHHH!!

WAIT. GIVE HER A HEAD START.

PWEET!

NOW. GLORY TO THE BEST HUNTER.

GAH! WRONG TURN.

CASSIE AND SAM ARE THE OTHER WAY!

ALSO, THEY'RE TOO BUSY DOING IT TO NOTICE I'M BEING CHASED BY--

--MONSTERS.

OH. HELLO, CATHERINE.

ALWAYS GOTTA BE A SMART ONE.

DARN IT!

AND LANDING US IN THIS MESS IS MY ENTIRE FAULT, TOO!

KRRSH

SHE KNOWS.

CLEVER THING.

KILL HER BEFORE SHE RUINS THE HUNT.

NO! GET THE OTHERS.

YOU KNOW THE PLAN: KILL SAMHAIN, LEAVE CASSIE FOR ME.

MM MMM.

I LIKE THE SMART ONES.

ALWAYS MAKE FOR A REAL NICE WARM-UP.

CASSIE!

SAMHAIN!

STOP MAULING EACH OTHER AND GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE!

GAH!

I'LL HAVE YOU GUYS KNOW...

...YOU ARE NO LONGER MY FAVORITE DINOSAUR!

URGHK.

LEAVE HER A-ALONE...

I SWEAR, DOC, I DON'T KNOW WHY YA EVEN BOTHER ANYMORE.

NOW JUST SHUT YER YAP AND HELP ME GET THE ARMOR ON, WOULD YA?

POOP POOPPOOP POOP.

POOOOOO--

OH, HELL NO!

WHULP!

WELL SHAVE MY HEAD AN' CALL ME HARRY.

THAT OUGHTA KEEP THINGS INTERESTIN'.

WAS THIS...ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH.

ALL THIS TIME I WAS AVOIDING SEX, AVOIDING FEELING ANYTHING FOR ANYONE, BECAUSE I WAS SO AFRAID I'D GET HIM, OR HER, HURT.

WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WERE THE ONE MAN FOR ME--A MAN WHO COULDN'T DIE.

BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO TRUST YOU.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE EVERYTHING I'M AGAINST.

NOW I'M JUST A MAN.

AND I'M A GIRL WITH NO MISSION...

"...JUST A WHOLE LOT OF FREE TIME. ANY IDEAS ON HOW I SHOULD FILL IT?"

MICHIGAN.

...NEFLORDS? HA, PLEASE.

NNNGH.

STRICTLY FIRST-YEAR RESIDENT WORK.

BARELY WORTHY OF A SCRUB-IN.

POOCH? HRRN.

ARE YOU TALKING TO SOMEONE?

THIS MUST BE OUR SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Vlad!

Humble and welcoming Pooch has invited in this man.

He speaks oh-so-very fast, but says he can help you.

MR. VLAD, I'M DR. VINCENT MORROW.

AN ASSOCIATE OF MINE IN NEW YORK TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR MARVELOUS CONDITION.

NOW, LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT YOU, YOU FABULOUS MONSTROSITY.

TO BE CONTINUED!

MONSTER BAIT FILM STUDIOS.

DOYLE VALLEY. GUYANA. SOUTH AMERICA.

SHREEEE!!

PWEEET!

SO THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE?

YOU SAVE US FROM A *GIANT SPIDER*, TAKE US IN, TREAT SAMHAIN, AND THEN ATTACK US AS SOON AS WE'RE DISTRACTED, WEAPONLESS...

...AND WEARING NOTHING BUT SHIT-EATIN' GRINS?

TAKE THE BREASTED ONE ALIVE! KILL THE PENISED THING!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

WE'VE BEEN PLAYED.

AND I HAVE GIVEN CAT MY BLADE.

SHRRP

NO MATTER.

I CAN ALWAYS FIND ANOTHER.

GLK!

SLCH

I LET MY GUARD DOWN, JUST FOR A SECOND, AND THIS IS WHAT I GET.

CHRREEEEET!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS WAS GOING TO END WITH ME PUNCHING A *DINOSAUR* IN THE *BRAIN*.

PWEEET!

SHRREEEEE!!

DISENGAGE MENTAL LINK!

PLCH

THEY'RE DISCONNECTED. WE MUST STRIKE NOW, WHILE THEY ARE UNCOORDINATED.

STUPID WARM BLOOD.

WE HUNTED AS A PACK LONG BEFORE DR. CARPENTER EVOLVED US.

WE ARE NEVER UNCOORDINATED.

SAM!

UGHK.

SHRRP

SAM!!

GO, CASSIE. R--RUN.

SHE IS STRONG WILLED! IT WILL TAKE ALL OF US!

UUUNHHNN!!

PREPARE THE FEMALE FOR THE HUNT.

MUUH.

RUN. IT'S BAD, BUT APPARENTLY... THIS STILL ISN'T ENOUGH... TO DESTROY ME.

UGH!

STOP HER BEFORE SHE HURTS HERSELF!

BUCK KEMP WILL BE ANGRY IF HIS HUNT IS DAMAGED!

RRRHHCHCHCHC.

SLSHH

AAAHHHH!!

THUD

URF!

URF!

=OOOF=

PLEASE EAT ME IN ONE BITE, BECAUSE I'M INTENSELY AGAINST BEING CHOMPED IN HALF!

ALSO, SHOULD YOU DECIDE TO SWALLOW ME WHOLE, PLEASE DO ME THE SERVICE OF KILLING ME FIRST.

I'M SMALL, SO ONE GOOD SMUSH OUGHT TO DO IT.

UR!

UR!

OH.

WELL, THAT'S A RELIEF.

I GET IT. YOU SAVED ME. SO YOU'RE A GOOD GUY.

YOU'RE THE PROTAGONIST, LIKE YOU WERE IN ***GORILLACONDA RETURNS*** AND ***GORILLACONDA LAYS AN EGG***, AS OPPOSED TO THE TRAGIC ANTAGONIST THAT YOU WERE IN THE FIRST FILM.

OOONF!

NOT TO APPEAR UNGRATEFUL, BECAUSE I APPRECIATE NOT BEING KILLED BY PSYCHOSAURS AND ALL, BUT I ACTUALLY HAVE TO GO BACK.

MY FRIENDS ARE IN PRETTY DIRE TROUBLE, EVEN IF THEY WERE TOO BUSY POKING EACH OTHER TO KNOW IT.

HMM. UNLESS YOU WEREN'T SAVING ME SO MUCH AS YOU WERE KIDNAPPING ME TO KEEP AS A PET OR A MATE OR WHATEVER IT IS GIANT MONSTERS WANT WITH PRETTY GIRLS.

I NEVER WAS VERY CLEAR ON THAT.

YOU DO HAVE A NOTORIOUS SOFT SPOT FOR LADIES.

NOT TO TOOT MY OWN HORN, BUT I HAPPEN TO BE AWARE I'M QUITE ATTRACTIVE.

NOT AS PRETTY AS CHIRPY KANEFSKY FROM ALL YOUR FILMS, OF COURSE, BUT CERTAINLY WORTH KIDNAPPING.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHIRPY KANEFSKY?

SHE WASN'T A VERY GOOD ACTRESS, BUT SHE LOOKED VERY NICE.

I GUESS SHE MUST BE PRETTY OLD BY NOW.

VERY OLD OR VERY--

--DEAD.

MICHIGAN.

FROM THE SCARS, I'D HAZARD A GUESS THAT THIS NEEDLE ISN'T THE FIRST THING YOU'VE BEEN STUCK WITH, MR. VLAD.

Oh how humble Pooch hates needles.

Feeling... faint...

WHUMP

MY PARTNER AND I OFTEN RUN INTO PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO PUT SHARP OBJECTS INTO OTHERS.

AH. I'VE HEARD TELL OF A PAIR OF SERIAL KILLER KILLERS.

SO YOU'RE THE "SLASHER SLAYERS."

YOU KNOW OF SLASHERS?

OF COURSE. I HEARD OF YOU TWO FROM ***LATE KNIGHT A.M.***

YES, I'LL ADMIT TO BEING A FAN, THOUGH MY AFFECTION IS MORE FOR THE CALLERS THAN ALAN HIMSELF.

"HEY, ALAN. MUH WIFE SHORE IS ACTIN' FUNNY. I THINK SHE'S POSSESSED BY LOOSEYFUR HISSELF!"

HA. YOKELS. IT'S A CASE OF ***PARASITIC DIABLOSIS.*** READ A BOOK SOMETIME.

OH. WELL, THAT'S INTERESTING.

WHAT IS INTERESTING? WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME? WHAT DO I HAVE?

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU ***HAVE,*** MY DEAR BOY.

IT'S WHAT YOU ***ARE.***

GLAD TO SEE YA AGAIN, 'CONDA.

YOU'VE BEEN LAYIN' KINDA LOW THE LAST FEW YEARS, SINCE I FINALLY GOT WANDA.

S'LIKE YA TOOK IT REAL PERSONAL.

I S'POSE YOU'RE SO BUSY KEEPIN' AN EYE ON THAT OL' SACK O' BONES KANEFSKY THAT YA AIN'T GOT TIME TO INTERFERE IN MY FUN NO MORE.

SO YA LANDED HERE. WHAT DIRECTION DID YA JUMP OFF TO?

BUCK KEMP! WE HAVE THE FEMALE, BUT SHE FIGHTS US!

WE MUST RELEASE HER SOON OR SHE WILL DESTROY OUR MINDS!

YOU KILL SAMHAIN? ***REALLY*** KILL HIM? HE AIN'T WHAT HE USED TO BE, BUT YA STILL GOTTA DO US REFORMED TYPES A COUPLE O' TIMES TO MAKE IT STICK.

YES! HIS WARM BLOOD SO WARM SO WARM FLESH SPLIT AND SPILLED AND--

YEAH, YEAH. ENOUGH ALREADY.

LET THE GIRL LOOSE.

THE HUNT'S ON.

THIS AIN'T OVER BETWEEN YOU AN' ME, 'CONDA.

AIN'T GONNA BE BEAUTY WHO KILLS THE BEAST.

IT'S GONNA BE ME.

MOVE, BREASTED MAMMAL!

SHE FIGHTS US. HER WILL IS STRONG.

FOCUS! SHE IS DANGEROUS AND WILL BE VERY ANGRY IF SHE BREAKS FREE!

NNUGH. YOU TH-THHINK I'M GOING TO P-PLAY THIS GUH...GAME?

HUNGH.

YOU ARE NOT HERE TO PLAY, FEMALE.

YOU ARE HERE TO RUN.

RELEASE ALL CONTROL. BUCK KEMP WILL WANT HER OF HER OWN MIND.

AHHHH!

HEY, MOTHER-FUCKERS! YOU'RE NOT HUNTING ME!

I'M HUNTING YOU!

THE BREASTED ONE RUNS. BUCK KEMP WILL WANT CAMERAS TO RECORD THE HUNT.

YES. LOVELY.

RIGHT AWAY.

DR. CARPENTER.

GHUH!

SHHH. DON'T FIGHT IT.

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE AS BETRAYED AS WE WERE.

HNNH.

AAAGHGHGH!!

HOW... HOW DID YOU KNOW?

CATHERINE.

SURVIVING IS MY SPECIALTY. MYSTERIES ARE HERS.

OH, SAM. THANK YOU.

TO HEAR MY OWN THOUGHTS AGAIN AFTER SO LONG.

IT'S A PLEASURE BEYOND DESCRIPTION. I KNOW.

WHICH IS WHY IT PAINS ME BEYOND WORDS TO SAY THAT YOU WILL BE REPAYING ME FOR FREEING YOU FROM YOUR SLAVERY...

...BY RETURNING ME TO MINE.

OH JEEPERS. IS SHE OKAY?

LET ME TAKE A LOOK.

HNNHH.

GRROOOAAARR!

YAH!

NOW, NOW. DON'T YOU YELL AT HER. THE GIRL MEANS ME NO HARM.

I DID THIS TO MYSELF.

TRIED TO CLIMB UP HIGHER TO SEE WHERE YOU WERE AND, WELL, I GUESS I TOOK A FALL.

I'M JUST GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT HER, OKAY?

I'M NOT A DOCTOR, BUT I AM HIGHER ON THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER THAN YOU.

THIS LEG LOOKS BROKEN, MS. KANEFSKY. BIG FAN OF YOUR WORK BY THE WAY.

I'M GUESSING YOU DIDN'T COME TO THIS VALLEY TO GET MY AUTOGRAPH.

SO, WHY ARE YOU HERE?

A FRIEND. WELL, I MEAN, HE'S NOT A FRIEND. HE DID ***STAB*** ME, AND NO MATTER HOW NICE HE IS NOW, I'M NOT GOING TO FORGET THAT. ANYWAY, HE NEEDED THE CURE. HE'S WHAT CASSIE CALLS A "SLASHER."

HE'S WHAT BUCK IS.

WAS, YOU MEAN. BUCK WAS CURED.

HONEY, ROMAN CARPENTER MAY HAVE FIGURED OUT HOW TO TAKE THE LIQUID EVIL OUT OF THOSE SLASHER TYPES...

...BUT YOU CAN'T CURE ***ASSHOLE.***

WHEN ROMAN WORKED HIS MAGIC ON BUCK, HE WAS SO PROUD.

HE'D TAKEN A MAN WHO USED TO KIDNAP WOMEN AND DRAG THEM OUT TO THE WOODS TO HUNT, AND TRANSFORMED HIM INTO A GOOD, UPSTANDING CITIZEN.

HE ALWAYS LOVED THE FACT THAT BUCK WAS HIS LEADING MAN, A LIVING ADVERTISEMENT FOR HOW WELL HIS PROCESS WORKED. HE THOUGHT IT WAS SYMBOLIC.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT BUCK WAS THE WORST ACTOR I'D EVER SEEN. BUT I WAS WRONG.

HE COULDN'T PLAY HERO...

...BUT FRIEND? LOVER?

SOMEONE WE COULD TRUST?

HE SHOULD HAVE WON AN OSCAR FOR HOW WELL HE PLAYED THOSE ROLES.

AS A LADY ONCE SAID:

CHK CHK CHK

KISS IT!

SCREEEE

SHIT!

JEEZ, PIG. WHAT'S AFTER YOUR HOCKS...?

ANGRY FUCKING BIRDS?

AIIIEEEEEEYAGH!!

I AM SORRY.

IT SEEMS THE PROCESS IS EVEN MORE PAINFUL WHEN PERFORMED IN REVERSE.

HUNH.

IT WASN'T THE PAIN THAT MADE ME SCREAM.

IT WAS THE DARKNESS COMING BACK TO ME.

BLACK.

VILE.

HATEFUL.

I CAN FEEL IT, CREEPING INTO MY BRAIN, FILLING EVERY FREE SPACE.

IT WANTS ME TO KILL YOU RIGHT NOW, DR. CARPENTER.

IT WANTS ME TO CUT YOU OPEN.

IT WANTS ME TO STOMP ON YOUR FACE.

IT THINKS THOSE ARE THE REWARDS IT DESERVES FOR HEALING MY WOUNDS, FOR KNITTING ME BACK TOGETHER.

IT THINKS I DESERVED TO DIE. IT SAYS I WAS A FOOL TO GIVE ITS POWER UP FOR A STUPID, BROKEN GIRL.

IT TELLS ME THAT IF I WANTED TO FUCK HER, I COULD HAVE DONE IT ANY TIME, WHETHER SHE WANTED IT OR NOT.

SCRREEEEE!

BEHIND ME, DOCTOR!

CCRSH

NO! WE KILLED HIM!

HIS KIND ARE STRONG, EVEN WHEN CURED! WE WERE TOO FOCUSED ON HOLDING THE BREASTED ONE!

DESTROY HIS MIND! THEN TEAR HIM APART.

AAAGHK!

GHKyAAaHHHHGG!

GHK!

WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

HE RESISTS!

HA. HAHAHAH!

GHK!

SPLTCH

SWOK

POK
POK
PLAP
SPLUK

GLK
GLLLRT.

SCREEEEEE!!

MOMMY! DADDY! I AVENGE YOU!!

SPLAK

PUNT

S-SAM...?

TO BE CONCLUDED!

DOYLE VALLEY. GUYANA. SOUTH AMERICA.

LONGTIME HOME OF MONSTER BAIT FILM STUDIOS.

BUCK KEMP. YOU WOODEN, NO-TALENT MOTHERFUCKER.

SHNK

CHUNK

I CAN'T BELIEVE I BOUGHT YOUR ACT FOR A SECOND.

I SHOULD HAVE SEEN RIGHT THROUGH YOUR BULLSHIT.

SHUNK

CHOK

YOU WERE NEVER EVEN GOOD ENOUGH FOR AN *ED WOOD* MOVIE.

YOU CAN'T DELIVER THE LINE "PUT HER DOWN, SNAKE-APE!" CONVINCINGLY.

HOW DID YOU PULL OFF THE CURED-KILLER ACT?

CHANG

THUK

ANY O' THE OTHER KILLERS Y'ALL'VE TUSSLED WITH EVER TELL YA THAT YA TALK TOO GODDAMN MUCH?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, BUCK?

DON'T LIKE A GIRL TO TALK BACK?

GHU!

THIS ISN'T THE *FIFTIES* ANY MORE, PIG-BOY.

NO!

OH...WHAT'S THIS? PROTECTIVE OF YOUR FACE?

THUK

KAK!

THAT'S JUST PRECIOUS.

PRETTY ATTACHED TO YOUR HANDSOME MUG AFTER SIXTY YEARS WITH THE SAME LOOK, HUH?

=KOFF=

=KOFF=

RRECH...

SEE, JUST A FEW HOURS AGO, I THOUGHT I WAS DONE WITH ALL OF THIS.

CURE THE SLASHERS AND I DON'T HAVE TO KILL THEM ANY MORE.

NO MORE HUNTING. NO MORE TORTURE OR BLOOD AND GORE.

MOSTLY I WAS SO RELIEVED.

BUT, I GOTTA ADMIT, THERE WAS A PART OF ME THAT WAS DISAPPOINTED.

NO!!

BUCK, YOU LUCKY BOY.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY SWAN SONG.

SLECH

AAAAHHH!!

RRRRULUUGHK!!

I KNOW WHAT Y'ALL ARE THINKIN', YA JUDGMENTAL LI'L BITCH.

OR, WELL, WHAT YA WOULD BE THINKIN' IF MY PSYCHOSAURS HADN'T JUST TURNED THAT BRAIN O' YOURS INTO A COLD COW PIE.

MDDGKH.

Y'ALL'D BE THINKIN' I WASN'T SUCH A GREAT HUNTER.

THAT I WAS A CHEATER, USIN' MY "PACK DOGS" LIKE THAT.

THING IS, I DON'T ENJOY THIS AS MUCH AS I DID WHEN I WAS BACK IN ALABAMA, TALKIN' DUMB WHORES INTO GOIN' OUT TO THE WOODS WITH THE STAR QUARTERBACK.

ONCE YA DIE AND COME BACK AS A SLASHER, IT'S NOT REAL EASY TO REACH THEM OLD HIGHS.

WANDA, RUDY, THE OL' MAN--EVERYONE WHO COMES HERE, SEARCHIN' FOR A CURE. Y'ALL ARE JUST KEEPIN' ME SHARP.

NOT THAT I DON'T DO MY BEST TO HAVE A GOOD TIME.

NOW, Y'ALL HOLD STILL. BUT MAKE PLENTY OF NOISE--

GROOAAARR!!

OH GOSH.

I THINK I NOW KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE THE THIRD GORILLACONDA MOVIE, LIKE, WAY BETTER.

SPLUT

HAHAHAHAHA!

PKOW PKOW PKOW

GOT THIS FROM OLD MAN CARPENTER. BEEN LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO USE IT FOR YEARS!

PKOW PKOW

PWEET!

MY FACE.

CASSIE!!

PWEEEETT!!

SHREEEEE!!

GROOOAAR!!

HOW WE HAVE MISSED YOUR FLESH!

BITCH! I LET Y'ALL HAVE THE ROLL IN THE HAY YA WANTED SO BADLY, AND THIS IS HOW YA REPAY ME?!

NO, *THIS* IS HOW, YOU BIG JERK.

HNGHK!

SHUNK

C'MON, CASSIE!

THERE'S AN *ALL-OUT GIANT MONSTER ATTACK* GOING ON.

WE NEED TO MOVE!

NNH? SAM?

ALL I KNOW IS THAT HIS KNIFE IS STUCK IN BUCK KEMP'S BACK RIGHT NOW.

AND THAT BUCK LOOKS PRETTY UPSET ABOUT IT.

CASSIE!
WATCH OUT!!
KRASH
OH GOSH. WHAT WAS THAT?
IT SMELLS!
CAT?
SPIDER SEX PHEROMONES. REYNOLD ENGINEERED 'EM IN THE LAB.
USED TO USE IT TO ATTRACT...*HUH*... ***THE BEAST*** FOR HIS SCENES.
HE CAN SMELL JUST A DAB FROM MILES AWAY.
I HOPE Y'ALL ARE READY FOR ROMANCE, SMART GI--
--RRRRLLLL!!
SSLLLCH
SAM!!
GHUUU.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE DEAD.

AND AFTER... AFTER WHAT WE DID, I DIDN'T KNOW IF I COULD HANDLE THAT.

CASSIE, CASSIE, CASSIE...

NO PARENTS TO REBEL AGAINST.

NO MOTHER TO ANGER.

SO THE MOMENT YOU FOUND A WAY TO REBEL AGAINST YOUR OWN RULES, YOU TOOK IT.

YOU LOVED SOMETHING YOU SHOULD HAVE HATED.

S--SAM?

WE HAVE RULES TO SEPARATE US FROM THE BEASTS.

TO MAKE US GOD'S MOST ELITE CREATIONS.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BREAKING RULES ALWAYS BRINGS--

CASSIE!

CONSEQUENCES.

SHUNK

OWW.

YOU SON OF A--!!

SHE CAME ALL THIS WAY FOR *YOU!*

SHE WAS GOING TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING!!

SHE *TRUSTED* YOU!!

CATHERINE CURIO. I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR RETURNING MY KNIFE.

AH!

SWOK

THIS IS FAMILIAR.

YOUR WIDE BLUE EYES. THE UTTER SHOCK.

THE SATISFYING RESISTANCE OF YOUR SOFT FLESH AS MY BLADE SINKS INTO YOUR--

THWOK

GRROA!

AND THIS, DEAR VLADIMIR-- IS IT VLADIMIR OR VLADISLOV?

NO MATTER. THIS IS THE CURE TO ALL THAT AILS YOU.

MICHIGAN.

REALLY?

ACTUALLY NO.

I'VE BEEN REFINING MY BEDSIDE MANNER, AND OCCASIONALLY I GET CARRIED AWAY WITH THE POSITIVE HYPERBOLE.

HRRRM.

THIS WILL MAKE YOU RELATIVELY SYMPTOM FREE FOR BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY-SIX HOURS.

IT'LL ONLY WORK ONE TIME, SO YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU USE IT ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE.

IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN IT'S TOO PAINFUL TO CONTINUE THE HUNT, BUT YOU HAVEN'T RETRIEVED IT YET.

HUNT?

THE HUNT FOR THE *OLDEST LIVING MEMBER* OF YOUR FAMILY.

YOU'LL NEED A SAMPLE OF HIS OR HER BLOOD FOR ME TO SYNTHESIZE A CURE FOR YOUR *CONDITION*.

GOOD DAY, MR. POOCH, MR. VLADIMIR!

IT IS... VLADISLOV.

KRRK

OH JEEZ. I'M SO SORRY, CASSIE.

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

HUNH.

INCOMING!

WHAT NOW?

PWEE--!

SPLAK

IT'S A GIFT.

FROM THE BEAST.

PKOW

KRRKSH

FOR YOU, CATHERINE.

YOU NEED TO GET CASSIE BACK TO THE LAB--NOW.

YOU'RE THE ONLY WAY SHE CAN GET THERE IN TIME. SHE'S BLEEDING OUT.

THE BEAST WANTS ME, NOT HER. NOT YOU.

TAKE HER AND GO. I'LL STAY.

THROOOM

KRRSH

GO!!

SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME.

THIS ISN'T A MOVIE! YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO SAVE ME!

NO! *DON'T!!*

THKRACHOOM

GOSH DARN IT.

YOU'RE EVEN MORE STUBBORN THAN POOCH!

FOOM

WHAT THE--?!

KRAK

GHAH!!

DOROTHY?

NO TIME FOR REUNIONS!

CASSIE NEEDS A DOCTOR.

NOW!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TRUST ME.

YOU WANT ME AS FAR AWAY FROM YOU AS POSSIBLE!

GET US THE H-E-DOUBLE POPSICLE STICKS OUT OF HERE!

JUMP, BIG MONKEY!

JUMP!!

THWIP

OOK?

POOP ON A POOP!

SHREEE!!

RRRRGGHHH!!

AH!

NO WAY AM I GIVING MY V-CARD TO YOU, BEAST!

LET HIM GO, 'CONDA!

I'LL LEAD HIM TO THE BRIDGE!

NSTER BAIT STUDIOS

IT WON'T SUPPORT HIM!

AND WE'LL BOTH FALL A THOUSAND FEET TO OUR DEATHS. YAY.

CASE ONE-ZERO-ONE-NINE: THE LAST CASE OF CAT CURI--

=OOF!=

OH GOD.

FACING DEATH AND A ONE-HUNDRED-FOOT-LONG SPIDER, YET YOU SHOW NO FEAR.

THAT IS, UNTIL YOU SEE *ME*.

WHO-- WHO ARE YOU?

I AM *AKAKIOS*, OF COURSE.

YES. AKAKIOS OF PANOPOLIS.

LITTERATOR. ALCHEMIST.

KEEPER OF THE BLACK FLAME THAT LIGHTS OUR WAY.

FATHER OF THE PURIFIERS.

NO, YOU AREN'T!

YOU'RE *SAMHAIN*.

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, ASHAMED OF HIS PAST AS A PET ASSASSIN.

YOU CAME HERE TO PURGE ALL THAT EVIL GOBBLEDY-GOOK FROM YOUR SYSTEM ONCE AND FOR ALL!

"GOBBLEDY-GOOK"? WHAT FLOWS THROUGH MY VEINS IS NOTHING LESS THAN A TRUE CURE FOR ALL DISEASES.

DISEASES OF THE BODY, THE MIND, OR OF THE SOUL. I EMBODY AN END TO INFERIORITY.

MY *PANACEA* WOULD HAVE ALLOWED ME TO CONTINUE MY MISSION OF PURIFICATION ACROSS A THOUSAND YEARS.

IF NOT FOR *THE WITCH.*

HER UNHOLY SORCERY SEARED MY MIND.

SHE STOLE MY MEMORIES AND ALLOWED ENEMIES FROM WITHIN MY OWN RANKS TO TURN ME INTO ONE OF THE *PALADINS* I HAD ONCE COMMANDED.

I BECAME A CONFLICTED CREATURE, LOOKING FOR A REASON--AND FINDING IT IN DESTROYING MY FORMER FOLLOWERS. I FOUND IT IN "LOVE." I FOUND IT IN A MASK.

BUT THE MASK HAS BEEN LIFTED. I SEE WITH MY TRUE EYES.

AND I SEE A WORLD THAT WILL BELONG TO AKAKIOS.

THAT'S TOO BAD.

YOU STABBED ME. PUT ME IN A COMA.

YOU WERE MY BOOGEYMAN.

BUT I WAS ALMOST STARTING TO LIKE YOU.

CHAROOM

NO.

OH NO NO NO...

BY THE LIGHT!

JEEZ.

HRRRRRRAAAAA.

MONSTER BAIT STUDIOS

AHHHHHHH!!

KRSH

HNNH!

THWP

TCH

KRASH

AAAGGHHK!!

GHHH--

POOP.

POOP.

POOP.

SPLOTCH

ALMOST...

YES!

AHHHHH!!

KRAK

OH GOD, CASSIE!

HHH-HOLD ON.

AHH--UNNNHH!!

EVIL SAM!

I'VE GOT EVIL SAM!!

CASSIE, PULL ME UP.

I'M... UNHG... I'M HURT. BADLY.

I'M SORRY... SO SORRY I HURT YOU.

THE DARKNESS-- WHEN I WAS DYING, IT OVERTOOK ME.

CASSIE...D-DON'T L-LISTEN TO HIM-- UNGH.

WAIT! IN ME...IS STILL THAT INCORRUPTIBLE PURITY... THE GOODNESS...

ALL I NEED...IS YOU. YOUR STRENGTH. YOUR BEAUTY.

YOU SAVED ME BEFORE.

YOU CAN SAVE ME AGAIN.

I NEED YOU, CASSANDRA.

CAT...

...DUCK.

PKOW

OH...

OH, CASSIE. I'M *SO* GLAD YOU'RE OKAY.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU TH--

CAT. STOP. DON'T THANK ME.

"WE DIDN'T WIN."

ARE YOU...?

YOUR WOUND.

DON'T.

"I'M FINE.

"DOC CARPENTER FIXED ME RIGHT UP."

THE END.

HACK/SLASH / MERCY SPARX

DETROIT FANFARE 2010 by **TIM SEELEY**

LADY OF BLISS PARISH.

WOW, YOU DON'T SEE THESE OLDSCHOOL CONFESSIONAL BOOTHS MUCH ANYMORE.

THAT'S TRUE. YOU MAY BEGIN YOUR CONFESSION, MISS.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDWEST.

RIGHT. UH, FORGIVE ME, FATHER, BECAUSE *BOY* HAVE I BEEN SINNIN'.

IT'S BEEN LIKE FOUR FUCKING *YEARS* SINCE MY LAST CONFESSION.

FORCED CONFESSION, I MIGHT ADD.

DAMN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

THAT'S OKAY, CHILD. THE LORD IS ALL FORGIVING.

I'M SURE THERE'S A LOT YOU NEED TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST.

IT'S JUST THAT I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.

I MEAN, DO I GO WITH GREED FIRST?

VANITY?

LUST?

DO YOU HAVE LIKE A *WHEEL* OF THE SEVEN DEADLIES I COULD SPIN OR SOMETHING?

JUST START WITH WHATEVER IS THE MOST PRESSING IN YOUR MIND.

WHAT TROUBLES YOU MOST?

OH, WELL THAT'S EASY.

THAT WOULD BE *YOU*, FATHER ARZOLA.

EXCUSE ME?

I THINK YOU'D BEST *LEAVE* AND COME BACK WHEN YOU'RE MORE *SERIOUS* ABOUT THIS, MISS.

I THINK *YOU* SHOULD *LEAVE*, FATHER, IF YOU WANT TO LIVE.

AND BELIEVE ME, I *AM* SERIOUS.

OH, AND *DUCK.*

WHAT?

WOOSH

JESUS!

ARRZZOOLLAAA.

GOD IN HEAVEN.

RECOGNIZE *HIM?*

THAT'S JAMES KIRKLAND, THE HISTORIAN WHO GOT TOO CLOSE TO CHURCH SECRETS BEFORE YOU HAD HIM *KILLED.*

OR AT LEAST HE *USED* TO BE.

WHAM

AND I'M *CASSIE HACK*, HERE TO SAVE YOUR ASS.

CASSIE HACK

SLASHER PREY TURNED PREDATOR. DAUGHTER OF THE UNDEAD MENACE KNOWN AS THE LUNCH LADY. NOMADIC PROTECTOR, BUILDER OF EMOTIONAL WALLS, WEARER OF SHORT SKIRTS.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, FATHER? DON'T BELIEVE IN RESURRECTION?

VLAD?

VLAD! LITTLE HELP?

HURR? SORRY, CASSIE.

I GOT CAUGHT UP IN DISGUISE.

THE CANDLES SMELL GOOD.

VLAD

CASSIE'S FELLOW SLASHER HUNTER, CONNOISEUR OF LATE NIGHT DINING, ROAD TRIP BUDDY, WIELDER OF BADASS MACHETES.

GRRNNNNNN!

FOR A FAMOUS AUTHOR THIS GUY ISN'T VERY ARTICULATE.

GGRRAAAAAHHH!

THAT IS INTERESTING WEAPON.

YEAH, BUT IT'S HARD FOR ME TO APPRECIATE WITH THE FUNK COMING FROM HIS DEAD BIRD ANGEL WINGS.

TNK

SHIT, THAT WAS CLOSE

ALRIGHT, FUCKER.

GRRAAAAHHH!!

ARRRRRRGG!!

SEE, I CAN GRUNT AND HIT THINGS TOO!

YES. ME TOO! HURR HURR HURR.

HERE, I COVER HIS EYES. MAYBE BIRDY MAN GO TO SLEEP.

SLEEP TIGHT, LITTLE ANGEL. HURR HURR HURR.

=SIGH=

NNNNNGGRRR.

TINK

HOOF! CASSIE!

GRRARGH!!

LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOT A FAN OF YOUR COMEDY EITHER.

AAGH!

NNNNNNGH.

ARZZOLLA... NOT YOUUU.

SORRY, GUY. TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T TELL THAT TO THE FIVE CLERGYMEN YOU KILLED WHILE LOOKING FOR HIM.

MOTHER FUCK!

WHAM

NNNN NNNGH. CASSIE.

VLAD, NNNGH. VLAD!

DON'T WORRY, HURR.

JESUS WILL SAVE US.

INRI

CRASH

VLAD...

YOU...

YOU BIG CHEESY NERD.

I HAD LOT OF TIME ON MY HANDS EARLIER TODAY, HURR.

LATER.

MMM, ALL THOSE BIRDIES. SMELLS LIKE CHICKEN.

YOU'VE SAVED ME FROM AN AVENGING ANGEL.

I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU.

DO ME A FAVOR AND ***DON'T***. BECAUSE OF YOU FIVE INNOCENT PEOPLE DIED, AND SADLY THAT MEANS WHOEVER ***ELSE*** IS GUILTY FOR THIS GUY'S DEATH WILL GO UNPUNISHED.

AND THAT WAS NO ANGEL. IT WAS A ***SLASHER***. THE ***UNDEAD!***

I AM FOREVER SORRY, AND CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE LORD WILL SPARE US ALL.

I TRIED TO WARN JAMES TO STOP PRYING INTO CHURCH SECRETS.

THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

I NEVER WANTED IT TO.

WELL, ENJOY HIDING OUT IN THIS SHITTY LITTLE CHURCH THE VATICAN SENT YOU TO DIE IN.

WAIT, BOTH OF YOU.

YOU... YOU MUST HAVE SO MUCH OF A BURDEN IN YOUR HEARTS.

ALL THIS VIOLENCE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONFESS TO THE ALMIGHTY? FOR ***REAL*** THIS TIME?

WHY DON'T YOU FOCUS LESS ON ***ME*** BURNING SOMEDAY, AND MORE ON ***HIM*** BURNING ***NOW.***

DEAR LORD IN HEAVEN, WHAT HAVE I DONE?

I ONLY, ONLY WANTED TO PROTECT THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH.

KIRKLAND, YOU FOOL. WHY COULDN'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I'M GLAD FOR YOU, THOUGH, THAT YOU LEFT.

SHE LOVED YOU TOO MUCH.

=SIGH=

"I'M GLAD YOU WEREN'T AROUND TO SEE HER FATE."

WELL, AT LEAST THAT WAS MORE EXCITING THAN *NORMAL* CHURCH MASS.

AND THEY HAD A CREMATORY. MAKES LIFE EASIER.

THIS SWORD. I AM THINKING LOOKS VERY GOOD ON ME.

IS VERY COOL, BUT HOW TO MAKE FLAMES?

THUNDER!

WHATEVER.

THUNDER!

IT'S BEEN A BUSY MONTH AND WE'RE BROKE AS A JOKE.

THUNDER VLAD, HOO!

HUR HUR HURR.

I THINK IT'S TIME TO HIT UP A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR-HOOD SLASHER SHIT COLLECTOR.

I KNOW A SHOP NEARBY.

OKAY... MONEY IS GOOD TOO.

SLASHER SHIT

ONE WEEK LATER.

SSSSSS

EASY... EASY...

THAT ONE'S A BEAUTY ALRIGHT.

HEY, WHAT THE HELL? IS THAT ACID OR SOMETHIN'?

YOU'RE GONNA MESS IT UP!

NO WORRIES, DUDE, I'LL TAKE IT! IT'S *GENUINE.*

BADASS.

WELL THEN, FEEL FREE TO DO WHATEVER THE HELL YOU WANT WITH IT.

VHS

DEATH CHAR

HANK

INVENTOR OF ANTI-ANGEL ARTILLERY. ROOMMATE OF MERCY SPARX. LOVER OF ALL THINGS METAL AND BEER.

SOLOMON CLOUD

5132 0701

6100 12/20

HANK

HERE, THIS ONE'S ON THE BIG GUY.

WEIRD LOOKIN' CARD. YOU GOTTA PIN NUMBER?

WE DON'T TAKE CREDIT.

AW, W-T-F!

JUST HOLD ON A MINUTE. I GOTTA CALL SOMEONE.

WHACK

ring ring

ring ring

MURDERCASE

FIGURES.

SPEAK.

WERE YOU BEATING THE TARGET WITH YOUR PHONE AGAIN? IT'S MAKIN' CRACKLING NOISES.

MERCY SPARX

DEVIL GIRL FROM THE UNDERWORLD. DRAFTED BY HEAVEN TO HUNT ROGUE ANGELS. HOPING FOR A FIFTY CENT RAISE THIS MONTH.

NO! NOT THE TARGET.

JUST THE LACKEYS.

YOU GOTTA STOP DOING...

HANK, LECTURE OVER. WHADDYA WANT?

WHAT'S OUR PIN NUMBER FOR THE NEW DEBIT CARD HEAVEN SENT?

'CAUSE IF YOU HAD WHAT I'M ABOUT TO BUY YOU'D BE DONE ALREADY.

I AM DONE. SHE'S OUT COLD... LITERALLY.

LEFT THE BITCH IN THE WALK-IN.

OR... MAYBE NOT.

DAMMIT!

SHIT, I KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. GOOD LUCK, I'LL SEE IF I CAN REMEMBER--

LATER HANK.

GRAAAHHH!

OOF!

YOU'RE GONNA PAY, SPARX!

GONNA SEND YOU BACK TO HEAVEN AFTER AN HOUR OF PERSONAL HELL.

AS MEAT PIE!

THAT'S FUCKED UP, CHLOE. WAY TO INSPIRE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE.

GRK... NNG...REALLY NOW. THOSE THINGS LOOK FUCKING SHARP.

THE SHARPEST.

LET'S HOPE!

AAAGH!

THWUD

EEEGHA!

AWW, PINNED TO THE WALL, JUST LIKE A BUTTERFLY.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I ALREADY BEAT YOUR ASS TOO MUCH TO FIGHT BACK?

GO...GO AHEAD. BUT KNOW THAT YOUR DAY WILL COME.

DON'T I KNOW IT. NOW, THIS IS GONNA HURT YOU A LOT MORE THAN ME.

HALO REMOVAL ALWAYS STINGS.

EEAAAGHHHHH!

REALLY, HANK. DID YOU HAVE TO RENT A GAY LITTLE *HYBRID*?

SOON.

BACK ALLEY.

GUESS YOU HATE SAVIN' ON GAS.

TRUNK'S OPEN. HURRY UP AND THROW 'ER IN SO I CAN GO BACK AND GET THAT SWORD.

SO *THIS* ANGEL REALLY WAS A BAKER?

YEAH, RAN SOME HIPSTER BAKERY. HERE, WANT A CUPCAKE?

ENJOY YOUR FEAST, VLAD. IT'S THE LAST FOR A WHILE. WE NEED TO START STASHING CASH.

AT LEAST THE SLASHER ACTION'S BEEN SLOW SINCE WE TOOK DOWN "DAVINCI CODE."

MAYBE NOT. I GOT CALL FROM CHRIS TODAY.

F'REAL?

HE SAYS WE NEED TO GO TO EAST COAST. MORE INFO COMING.

THAT'S A LOT OF GAS. LOOKS LIKE I GOTTA PULL A DOUBLE ALL WEEKEND.

YOU KNOW IF YOU PUT ON A FRICKIN' *SMILE* MAYBE YOU'D GET A *TIP* EVERY NOW AND THEN.

YOU BEEN HERE TWO WEEKS, YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

GET BACK TO WORK.

SORRY, HITLER'S CALLING. GOTTA GO PUT ON MY *CHARM* AND SCORE SOME DOUGH.

IS OKAY. THIS WAFFLE IS THE ONLY COMPANY I NEED, HURR.

CAN I... UH...HELP YOU?

IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, SWEETY.

ELSEWHERE.

YEAH, I'M SORRY BUDDY. ALL YOU GOT HERE'S A BUNCHA CRAP.

I KNOW A GUY ON WESTERN AVE. DEALS COMICS, MAYBE HE CAN TAKE 'EM?

AH, JUST FORGET IT. AIN'T WORTH MY TIME.

TOLD MY KID TO GET THIS STUFF OUTTA THE HOUSE WHEN HE MOVED, BUT IT'S BEEN LONG ENOUGH.

SO LONG JIMMY'S BEDROOM, HELLO NEW THEATER ROOM!

NO WORRIES. I'LL, UH, THROW THIS STUFF OUT FOR YA.

SWELL COMICS

NO.1. AUGUST

PRESENTS

CHIPPY chipmunk

10¢

SUCKER!

OH MARIO, YOU SNEAKY BASTARD. YOU JUST HIT THE JACKPOT.

YOU'RE CLOSIN' EARLY TONIGHT AND MAKIN' A LITTLE STOP AT "SPANKY'S" ON THE WAY HOME FOR A LITTLE ENTERTAINMENT.

COMICS

SORRY, WE'RE CLOSED UP FOR THE NIGHT.

NNNNNNNGH.

I SAID WE'RE *CLOSED*, SO UNLESS YOU GOT...

WHAT THE HELL?

COMICS

SWORRRDD.

SWORD? I GOT A SHIT-TON O' SWORDS.

I ALSO GOT OL' *BRONSON* HERE, SO YOU WANNA TAKE A STEP BACK NOW?

SWORD!

WHAT THE *HELL* ARE YOU?!

STAY BACK! I'LL...

BOOM

RRAAGH!

JESUS CHRIST, YOU THINGS ARE *REAL!*

NNNNNGH.

ALL THIS TIME I JUST THOUGHT I WAS SELLIN' THAT FREAKY SHIT TO A BUNCH O' IDIOTS.

I...I THINK I KNOW WHAT SWORD YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT.

=SIGH= KARDASHIANS, IF I EVER SEE YOU ON THE STREET I'M SLITTIN' YOUR *FUCKING* THROATS.

THAT *ALONE* SHOULD GET ME IN WITH HEAVEN.

DADDY'S HOME.

GOOD, I'M BORED OUTTA MY MIND. HOW WAS THE SO CALLED 'PAWN SHOP DE OCCULT'?

STAY-LO

MERCY, WAIT'LL YOU SEE THIS BAD BOY.

I PRESENT TO YOU, THE SWORD OF SIR BADASS.

IT BOILED DEMON *AND* ANGEL BLOOD WHEN TESTED. IT'S *EPICALLY BRUTAL.*

IT'S GOTTA BE GENUINE *SERAPHIM.*

AND I GOT A RARE DOKKEN VINYL FOR TEN BUCKS.

NO WAY.

HA...

HA HA!

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

EVERYONE IN SHEOL* KNOWS THE STORY OF THAT SWORD!

IT'S THE WEAPON OF THE ANGEL *HASMED*, FAMOUS FOR *MISPLACING* IT WHEN SPENDING A MILLENNIUM ON DUTY HERE.

IT'S ONE OF THE ONLY STORIES ON RECORD OF HEAVEN *FUCKING UP.*

IT'S WHY I GOT IT *TATTOOED.*

LOST FROM HEAVEN FOR CENTURIES, AND *YOU* JUST FOUND IT AT A *PAWN SHOP.*

YOU KNOW, IF YOU'D HAVE JUST LET ME SEE YOU NAKED, I'D ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THAT TATTOO.

*MERCY'S HOMELAND, IN BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, A DIMENSION OR TWO AWAY FROM PURGATORY.

HA, IT DOESN'T STOP THERE.

"HASMED WAS ABLE TO HIDE HIS MISTAKE FOR A FEW HUNDRED YEARS, UNTIL HE WAS CALLED TO DUTY.

"EVENTUALLY THE BIG GUY CALLED FOR SOME HOLY VENGEANCE OR SOME SHIT ON THIS VILLAGE OF, I DUNNO, 'VILE SINNERS.'

"HE ENDED UP NOT EVEN GETTING IN TROUBLE. THEY JUST CALLED HIM BACK AND TRIED TO SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG.

"BUT YEAH, ALL THOSE STORIES ABOUT ANGELS TAKING OUT GIANT ARMIES, REEKING GOD'S VENGEANCE.

"THAT'S ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE TOOLS. SHIT IS HARDCORE."

LOOKS LIKE PAWN MAN MADE A BAD DEAL.

CASSIE, LOOK.

THAT'S OUR PAWN SHOP GUY, MARIO!

PAWNED!

GRUESOME MURDER!

Daily Time
PAWNED
GRUESOME

FUCKER MOTHER!

AND FINDING OUT FROM A *NEWSPAPER?*

INTERNET, YOU'VE FAILED ME.

THE WORDS *ARZOLA* WERE WRITTEN ON THE WALL IN OL' MARIO'S BLOOD.

CELL PHONE.

YOU KNOW, JUST BECAUSE I SAY "FUCKER MOTHER" ON ACCIDENT ONE TIME, IT'S NOT FAIR YOU KEEP USING.

I KNOW, BUT TELL ME A BETTER THEORY.

BUT VLAD, IT ROLLS OFF THE TONGUE!

YO, KRANK!

WE'VE GOT SOME MAJOR SHIT GOING DOWN. BY THE *KILL STYLE* IT LOOKS LIKE A CERTAIN SLASHER WITH A *SWORD THEME* JUST CAME BACK LOOKING FOR HIS TOY.

WE *DID* BURN HIM.

HEH.

YOU CAN DO YOUR PODCAST *LATER!*

DO WHATEVER YOU CAN.

I DON'T KNOW, GET US SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE?

DO MAGIC COMPUTER STUFF?

=SIGH=

JUST CALL US BACK IF YOU FIND ANYTHING.

WELL THAT WAS--

SERIOUSLY, VLAD?

BILLY OCEAN?

HURR HURR HURR.

DEAL WITH IT, FUCKER MOTHER.

LADY OF BLISS PARISH.

DRINKING AWAY THE GUILT, FATHER?

NO, IT CAN'T BE.

JUST BECAUSE THE SWORD'S WIELDER IS GONE, DOESN'T MEAN THE SWORD IS DONE.

YOU'RE DEAD. WE... WE BURNED YOU!

WE BURNED YOU!

YOU FUCKING *BURNED!*

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE MISTAKING ME FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

MY NAME IS NAHMAT, AND I'M GOING TO ASK YOU SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

I'D ANSWER CAREFULLY IF I WERE YOU.

IT MAY DETERMINE HOW MANY MILLENIA YOU GET TO SPEND IN PURGATORY FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

IF YOU SHOULD BE SO LUCKY AS TO FIND YOURSELF IN PURGATORY.

WHERE, WHERE ARE WE? WHAT...WHAT IS THAT?!

THAT, FATHER, IS MY *FRIEND*, AND AS TO WHERE WE ARE?

WE'RE IN A PLACE OF *TRUTH*.

MAN, WHAT A SAD SACK OF SHIT THIS IS.

UGH, CAN WE PLAY OUR IPOD INSTEAD?

MERCY, I PUT THAT SONG ON FOR MY NEW FRIEND HERE.

C'MON, YOU KNOW IT'S GOOD.

RESTROOMS

SELLOUT.

SO YEAH, WE'RE, UH, NOT "TOGETHER." I SWEAR.

FUNNY, YOU SOUND MARRIED.

FINE, BUT IF WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO POP COUNTRY WE'RE GONNA NEED SHOTS.

"THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN SLEEP IN THAT SHITHOLE MOTEL ANYWAY."

OH GOD...

=SOB=

DO...DO YOU WANT A ROOM?

LATER.

MAN, I'VE BEEN HOLDIN' THIS IN FOR AN HOUR TALKIN' TO THAT CHICK.

GOTTA GO GOTTA GO GOTTA GO.

DAMMIT, WHY IS IT THE CLOSER YOU GET THE WORSE IT GETS?!

FINALLY!

THIS ONE'S GONNA RU--

HUH?

I'D LIKE TO DO *SOMETHING* NEW WITH MY HAIR, IT'S JUST I DON'T WANT THAT LESBIAN LOOK.

I MEAN, IT LOOKS *FINE* ON YOU.

I'D JUST LOOK LIKE A LESBIAN.

MEN

WOMEN

=SIGH=

ARRZZZOLA!

WHAT THE-- *HANK!*

CRASH

NOT YOUU. SSWWORDD.

ALRIGHT, IT'S *GO TIME* MOTHER-FUCKER.

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT AND FUSTHER-MORE...

WHAT KIND OF FRICKIN' ANGEL ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

COME ON! WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE.

WHAT? SHE JUST...SHE'S *RED!*

JUST COME ON!

I THINK THERE'S ANOTHER BATHROOM THIS WAY.

GRK... YOU'RE STRONG, I'LL GIVE YA THAT.

AND PHEW... *STANKY!*

LOOK OUT!

EXCUSE ME.

WOAH! HEY BUDDY, TRUST ME, YOU DO *NOT* WANNA GO IN THERE.

EEAGHH!!

WELL, YOU FEEL PAIN. THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW.

GUESS I SHOULDA ASKED SOME QUESTIONS FIRST.

WHACK

ANNNNND *KNOCKOUT.*

AT LEAST BEFORE I CUT YOUR FACE ALL TO HELL.

DON'T MOVE!

NNNNNNNGH.

GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, BITCH.

SLOWLY.

HAHA... PFFWHA? WHAT THE FUCK ARE *YOU* SUPPOSED TO BE?

SO ASKS THE DEMON LADY?

YOU'RE NOT WHO WE WERE LOOKING FOR, BUT THE BODIES IN THE HOTEL LOBBY ARE YOUR *LAST* VICTIMS.

VLAD?

FWHUP

FWHUP

FWHW

LOOK, MAYBE YOU WANNA SLOW YOUR ROLL.

SNATCH!

BEFORE YOU *PISS* ME OFF.

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE ANYONE ON MY *LIST.*

THWUD

WERE THOSE POOR BASTARDS AT THE MOTEL ON YOUR LIST?

THAT WHOLE PLACE IS ON MY LIST, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT.

AND YOU KNOW, I'VE TAKEN OUT SO MANY PEOPLE I JUST CAN'T KEEP UP.

THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW.

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SIGH
HERE WE GO.
HOW MANY OF THOSE ROUNDS YOU GOT?
SEVEN? TEN?
SHE IS RIGHT, CASSIE. WE MUST TAKE DOWN FACE TO FACE.
BLAM
BLAM
CLICK
CLICK
OKAY, THIS TIME I SHOULD ASK QUESTIONS FIRST, THEN KICK ASS.
HOW 'BOUT YOU, YOU WANNA ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS?
OKAY THEN.
SHIT. VLAD! WATCH OUT FOR HER TAIL!

CRACK

WHAT THE--?! SERIOUSLY?

SON OF A BITCH. YOU *DO* HAVE THE SWORD!

WHAP

OUCH!

MERCY, CATCH!

GOT IT, HANK!

SSSSSS

WHAT THE...

FUCK ME! OWWW!

SHIT, SO STUPID. IT BOILS DEMON BLOOD. OF COURSE I CAN'T USE IT.

HANK, WHEN I'M DONE WITH THESE CUNTS, I'M KICKIN *YOUR* ASS NEXT.

NNNNNNGH.

AAGH!

FWOOM

WHAM

RRAAGGH!!

OH, SHIT.

SO YOU FUCKERS WANNA FOCUS ON THE *REAL* PROBLEM FOR A SECOND?

RESTROOMS

NNNNNGHHH.

FUCK, THAT'S NOT KIRKLAND! IT'S A WOMAN!

RAAGGHH!

A GNARLY DECOMPOSING WOMAN.

MERCY, I DON'T THINK THAT'S AN ANGEL OF *ANY* KIND.

NO SHIT.

SO OKAY, TRUCE. ANY IDEAS?

I DIDN'T MEAN TO.

I SWEAR I DIDN'T MEAN TO BRING HER ANY HARM.

KIRKLAND WANTED TO STEAL THE RELIC. HIDE IT.

HE'D LEARNED OF ITS POWER, AND THAT WE'D USED IT TO REMOVE CERTAIN ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH.

"WE SAW IT AS A SACRED GIFT FROM THE LORD.

"I WAS CHARGED WITH KEEPING CERTAIN SECRETS RELATED TO THIS.

"I...I LOVED SISTER LEWIS. BUT SHE LOVED JAMES. I NEVER ACTED ON MY FEELINGS, BUT SHE AND JAMES...THEY DID.

"I JUST WANTED JAMES GONE. I THREATENED HER. SAID I WOULD TELL THE BISHOP OF HER AFFAIR IF SHE DIDN'T GET HIM TO CALL OFF HIS EFFORTS.

"I NEVER EXPECTED HER TO GO TO THE BISHOP HERSELF. NOT ONLY DID THEY USE THE RELIC AGAINST HIM, BUT THEY EXCOMMUNICATED HER.

"WHEN HE WAS ASSASSINATED IT CRUSHED HER. WE NEVER SPOKE AGAIN.

"AND WE NEVER WILL.

"IN HER SUICIDE LETTER SISTER SAID THAT SHE FELT SHE DIDN'T DESERVE ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN. SO SHE TOOK HER OWN LIFE, AND WOULD FOREVER DO PENANCE IN HELL.

"BUT IT NOW LOOKS AS IF THE LORD HAS CHOSEN TO USE THE RELIC--THE SWORD--TO ENACT JUSTICE ON THE TRULY GUILTY, DOESN'T IT?"

WOOOSH

BURN IN HELL, HAG!

GOTTA LOVE THE *HELLFIRE LIGHTER.*

EERRAAGH!

LOOKS LIKE THAT DID *SOMETHIN'.*

WHACK

OOF!

GREARGH! ARZOLAAA!

TLANK

ALRIGHT, MOTHERFUCKER! ENOUGH!

IT'S HOLY WATER TIME!

SQUIRT SQUIRT

SHIT.

TRIED MY BEST, GUYS. LATER.

LOOK, JUST TELL ME WHICH SIDE YOU WORK FOR, BECAUSE THIS IS CONFUSING THE SHIT OUT OF ME.

SIDE?

I'M ON THE *SIDE* OF HORNY TEENS EVERYWHERE WHO DON'T DESERVE TO DIE FROM HOCKEY-MASK-WEARING FREAKS JUST FOR HAVING A *BONER* OR SHOWING THEIR TITS ON SPRING BREAK.

EVEN IF THEY'RE *IDIOTS.*

WAAIITT. I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU GUYS ON THAT RETARDED RADIO SHOW HANK LISTENS TO. THE "SLASHER SLASHERS."

I NEVER BELIEVED IT. JUST SOUNDED TOO "RIDICULOUS."

YOU *DO* SEE THE IRONY IN THAT, RIGHT? SO *YOU'RE* NOT UNDEAD?

HMM, GOOD QUESTION.

LITTLE... HELP?

VLAD!

HSSSSSSSSS!

IS... VERY... *HOT!*

I USUALLY RIP THE HALOS OFF OF MY ENEMIES TO STOP 'EM BUT THIS CHICK DOESN'T HAVE ONE.

AND NONE OF OUR OTHER METHODS ARE WORKING.

WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO TO STOP THESE THINGS?

THAT WORKS TOO.

HONESTLY? WE USUALLY JUST ***BEAT THE SHIT*** OUT OF THEM UNTIL THEY STOP MOVING.

KEE-RASH

HYBRID

NNNNNRRRRRRR...

STAY THERE, LITTLE SLASHER.

WE DON'T NEED YOU RUNNIN' OFF.

SORRY, MOTORCYCLE. BUT THIS HAS TO BE DONE.

WHAM

DAMN, GLAD WE DIDN'T GO HEAD TO HEAD.

BZZZZ

MY TURN.

BUZZZZZZZZZ

AARRRRRRRRRGH!

OH GOD. GROSS.

=BURP=

GUYS?

GUYS!

I THINK... I THINK YOU GOT HER.

YOU... CAN NEVER, HURR, BE SURE.

BITCH IS *STILL* MOVIN'.

AW MAN, I'M GONNA PUKE.

NNNNNNNAAAAGGHHH.

=BLAAAGH=

I THINK THIS MIGHT WORK. THE SAME WEAPON THAT BROUGHT HER AND KIRKLAND BACK FROM THE DEAD.

AW MAN... TOO BRUTAL. TOO...

HRK!

THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, CASSANDRA.

WHO THE HELL?

REST, SISTER MARIE LEWIS. BE WITH YOUR BELOVED.

NNNRRNNNNN...

NAHMAT! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE? HOW 'BOUT A WARNING NEXT TIME YOU HAVE A JOB LIKE THIS FOR ME?

YOU KNOW HER?

MERCY, THERE IS HEAVEN AND THERE IS HELL, AND THEN THERE ARE MANY IN-BETWEENS.

I'LL TAKE THE SWORD NOW.

NAHMAT! I KNOW WHAT THAT NAME MEANS.

HEY! WAIT, WHO IS THIS BITCH?

TRUST ME, JUST LET THIS ONE GO.

SNATCH!

ME AND VLAD USUALLY KEEP THE *LEFTOVERS.* MAKE SURE THINGS ARE PROPERLY DISPOSED OF.

DON'T FUCK AROUND. GIVE THE BROAD WHAT SHE WANTS.

IF YOU TRULY WANT THIS DISPOSED OF *PROPERLY*, CASSANDRA HACK, I'D BEST TAKE IT *HOME*.

OR I COULD ALWAYS SELL IT TO A *PAWN SHOP*.

BITCH ALWAYS HAS TO GET THOSE LITTLE JABS IN.

NAHMAT, WHY DON'T *YOU* DISPOSE OF IT, HEH.

THIS MAY ONLY BE TRUSTED IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGEL OF VENGEANCE.

ON EARTH IT WILL ONLY CONTINUE TO DISTORT THE SUPERNATURAL BALANCE.

I'M ASSUMING THE RENTAL CAR'S GOING ON HEAVEN'S CREDIT CARD?

WELL DONE, MERCY... ALL OF YOU. YOU'VE PASSED ANOTHER TEST.

TEST? THIS WASN'T A TEST! YOU GUYS HAD NO IDEA ABOUT THIS AND JUST SHOWED UP TO COVER YOUR ASS! I ONLY CAME HERE TO TAKE OUT THE CAKE BAKER!

HOW DO YOU KNOW, MERCY, THE SWORD WASN'T LEFT BEHIND FOR SOME GRANDER PURPOSE?

ONE THAT IS NOW COMPLETE?

HOW DO *WE* KNOW YOU'RE NOT ON SOME TOTAL *BULLSHIT* AND JUST TRYING TO KEEP HEAVEN FROM LOOKING STUPID?

YOU DON'T.

THANKS FOR AGREEING TO GIVE US A LIFT TO THE RENTAL CAR PLACE, DUDE.

THANK YOU FOR THE MIX CDS. YOU HAVE HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS ON THIS?

HEH, NOT QUITE. MAN, THIS SKELETAR FIGURE RULES.

IS YOURS TO KEEP.

SERIOUSLY? HELL YEAH!

FRANK'S

OPEN

IRISH

HEY HOMOS, WE'RE READY TO ORDER!

NEED THE ENTIRE PARTY AT THE TABLE.

FACEBOOKING YOUR FRIENDS THERE?

HAHA. NO, ENTERING INFO INTO MY JOURNAL WHILE THE DETAILS ARE FRESH.

THIS THING'S SAVED MY LIFE MORE THAN ONCE.

SEE, I TOLD YOU WE NEED TO DO THAT.

HANK, *HEAVEN* DOES THAT FOR US. DON'T ASK ME WHERE THEY BUY MANILLA FOLDERS AND INK CARTRIDGES, BUT WE GET THE FILES FROM THEM READY TO GO.

LOOK, WHATEVER. WHY DON'T YOU GET OUT YOUR BAG OF TRICKS? I'M THIRSTY.

MY BAG? IT'S IN THEIR VAN. YOU DON'T THINK WE'RE GONNA BE ATTACKED, DO YOU?

NOT *THAT* BAG, IDIOT.

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' 'BOUT.

ANYONE ELSE WANT SOME IRISH IN THEIR COFFEE?

OHH

WHAT! I SWEAR, MOTHER-FUCKERS ALWAYS JUDGING.

IF THIS WAS A *MIMOSA* NO ONE WOULD BAT AN EYE.

HOW DO YOU GUYS EVEN KNOW I HAVE A *LIVER*, ANYWAY?

ANNND *SAVE*.

RIGHT, LIKE WHY YOU SMOKE SO MUCH. YOU HAVE *SPECIAL* LUNGS. NOT SURE I BUY IT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

WHAT'S WRONG THERE, *CASEY*?

NOTHING *MARCY*. THIS SLASHER JUST GOT TO ME FOR SOME REASON.

I DO THIS SHIT ALL DAY LONG AND USUALLY I'M JUST *NUMB*.

I DUNNO, I THINK IT'S JUST SO FUCKING WEAK. KIRKLAND IS A TYPICAL CASE, BUT THEN HIS *LOVER* COMES BACK TOO, AND SHE *STILL* GOT THE SHORT END?

THE CREEPS RESPONSIBLE WILL GET AWAY WITH *MURDER*, AND SHE JUST GOES BACK IN THE GROUND...DUST...WHATEVER.

MAN, AT LEAST YOU GUYS FIGHT UGLY *MONSTERS* AND SHIT.

WE GOTTA BEAT UP HOT *ANGEL CHICKS* ALL THE TIME.

HURTS MY HEART.

I MEAN LIKE, *REALLY* HOT CHICKS.

WHAT'S THIS *WE* SHIT?

LOOK, CASS, I AM NOT SOMEONE TO TAKE ADVICE FROM, BUT TRUST ME...

I'VE SEEN ENOUGH SHIT TO KNOW THERE'S NO WORRY.

THE CREEPS *WILL* PAY.

JUST MIGHT NOT BE ON THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE.

UH OH. WHAT'S THAT MEAN FOR *US*?

HURR, HURR, HURR.

VLAD, SHUT IT. I'D RATHER NOT ASK THAT QUESTION.

LATER.

SURE THING. UH, OVER HERE.

ALRIGHT, WE'RE DOING A *FULL* WALKAROUND ON THIS RENTAL, AND I WANT FULL COVERAGE.

OURS ALWAYS SEEM PRONE TO GETTING *DINGS.*

MAN, WEIRD DAY. BUT THEY WERE PRETTY COOL. VLAD RULES, AND CASSIE'S SMOKIN.'

REALLY? SHE SEEMED LIKE A WANABE HARDASS TO ME. FUCKING WHINEY KID.

THEY SEEMED NICE. LIKE US, BUT DIFFERENT. I LIKE THE HANK.

YEAH, HE WAS COOL, BUT I DUNNO...

THAT MERCY'S KIND OF A *BITCH.*

...DIED TODAY WITH UNCANNY TIMING.

OFFICIALS CLOSE TO THE CHURCH SAY THE DEATHS WERE FROM NATURAL CAUSES.

*BUT AUTHORITIES ARE **PERPLEXED**. FOUR MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, UP TO THOUSANDS OF MILES APART, **SIMULTANEOUSLY** DYING OF BRAIN ANEURISMS AS THEY GAVE MASS.*

*TWO HIGH RANKING MEMBERS OF THE VATICAN, ANOTHER IN NEW YORK, AND LOCAL **FATHER ARZOLA** OF **OUR LADY OF BLISS** PARISH.*

FUCKER MOTHER!

HURR, ODD, YES. YOU FEEL BETTER AT ALL?

WOW. ACTUALLY. I DO. MAYBE THERE *IS* SOMEBODY WATCHING US.

"SHIT! DOES THIS MEAN WE HAVE TO START GOING TO CHURCH?"

THE END.

THE GOOD SON

HACK/SLASH #17B by TRAD MOORE & FELIPE SOBRIERO

"THE BUTCHER WAS MY FAMILY."

"NO, YOUR REAL FAMILY, VLAD."

"THE BUTCHER WAS MY REAL FAMILY, CASSANDRA. LIKE YOU.

JESUS, JOHN.

STOP BEING SO J--

"THERE WERE WOMEN. SAID THEY WERE FAMILY...

SHIT!

AH, JOHNNY. SO RUDE.

"THE BEANE SISTERS, SHE CALLED THEM."

"SHE?"

"SHE WAS... A FRIEND."

"I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS BEFORE ME?"

"HRRRM...

AH.

SHE'S NOT GOING TO STOP. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

EVEN IF YOU KILL ALL OF US. THE TRUTH WILL GET OUT.

"THEY WERE...

OH, THERE'S NO *IF* ABOUT IT, JOHNNY.

NO IF AT ALL.

"...NOT GOOD PEOPLE."

WE *ARE* GOING TO KILL YOU ALL.

URGH.

AND THAT BITCH WILL LEARN...

...TO NEVER FUCK WITH THE FAMILY.

"I'D SAY THAT'S PRETTY MUCH...

...THE UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT DUDE--THAT'S, LIKE, A BEANE TRADEMARK.

NOBODY KNOWS HOW THEY DO IT.

ACCORDING TO THIS BLOG--

WHAT IS A BLOG?

IT'S...YOU KNOW WHAT? NEVER MIND.

THIS IS THE FIRST THING THAT CAME UP WHEN I GOOGLED "BEANE" AND "CHICAGO."

WHAT IS GOOGLED?

ARE YOU TRYING TO BE FUNNY?

WHAT IS FUNNY?

HILARIOUS. ANYWAY, THIS BLOG SAYS THAT THE BEANES HAVE BEEN AT THE TOP OF THE CHICAGO UNDERWORLD FOR FORTY YEARS.

SERIOUSLY. WHO SAYS "UNDERWORLD" ANYMORE?

NOBODY KNOWS A DAMN THING ABOUT THEM, EXCEPT THAT THEY'RE BRUTAL.

THIS WAS THE FATHER OF THE CHICK WHO RUNS THE SITE...

...OR SO SHE SAYS. I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE MOSIAC MAN'S VICTIMS, ISN'T IT, VLAD?

MARI?!

HRRRRRM. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE WOMAN?

AH, LET ME SEE. ABOUT... OKAY.

SAYS HER NAME'S MARIANTHI AGYROS.

SO, THAT'S YOUR FRIEND, THEN?

THAT IS MARI. MARI!

WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE EXCITED. AND I'M NOT AT ALL ANNOYED THAT YOU NEVER ACTUALLY FELT LIKE MENTIONING HER.

MARI... NEEDED HELP. FOR BEANES.

AFTER I HELPED HER, SHE...WAS NOT MY FRIEND ANYMORE.

TYPICAL.

WELL, "FRIEND" OR NOT, THIS AGYROS CHICK IS OUR BEST BET FOR FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

WE DO NOT KNOW IF BEANES *ARE* MY FAMILY.

NO, WE DON'T. BUT THEY'RE THE ONLY LINK WE HAVE TO WHOEVER THAT MIGHT BE.

SO UNLESS YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHERE TO START, I GUESS I'M GOING TO GO TALK TO YOUR FRIEND.

IF SHE'S NOT ALREADY DEAD.

HER ADDRESS IS RIGHT THERE ON THE BLOG.

IF THE BEANES ARE AS BAD AS SHE SAYS, SHE IS EITHER THE DUMBEST GIRL IN CHICAGO OR SHE JUST WANTS TO GET KILLED.

OR BOTH.

I WILL COME WITH YOU.

YOU WILL STAY IN THAT BED.

THE RIDE HERE ALMOST KILLED YOU.

THE SERUM FROM STRANGE DOCTOR WITH THE FUNNY EYE--

WILL MAKE YOU HEALTHY FOR A DAY.

BUT WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO FIND THE BEANES AND FROM THERE, YOUR FAMILY, IF THAT'S NOT THEM.

VLAD, I'LL BE FINE. I'M JUST GOING TO TALK TO HER.

WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?

THE HOME OF MARIANTHI AGYROS.

SUBTLE.

AAAAAAAAIIEEE!!

TERRIFIC.

"WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?" SHE SAID.

OKAY, I AM CLEARLY LATE TO THE PARTY HERE.

AAAAAAAAAAA!!

I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.

HEY, I'M-- WHOA!
MOVE, GODDAMNIT!
OKAY, WHAT THE FUCK?
OH, WHO'S THIS NOW-- ANOTHER HIRED GUN?
OR BAT, I SUPPOSE.
IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT I HAVE TO DO FATHER'S SCUTWORK ON YOUR HIRED MUSCLE, BUT A LITTLE GIRL?
BAH.
HOLY SHIT.
ANYONE ON THE COM LINK STILL HEARING ME: I DON'T CARE WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU ARE.
I NEED MEN HERE.
NOW.
I GET KILLED, YOU DON'T GET PAID.
HOLD STILL FOR ME, DARLIN'.
YEAH... NO.

:OOOOFFFF:

MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU.

MAYBE YOU ARE GOING TO BE FUN.

SHITFUCK.

GET OUT OF THE WAY, YOU STUPID BITCH.

YOU'RE FUCKING UP THE PLAN.

SPOILED, UNGRATEFUL...

ARRRGH!

URRRM. BETTER.

FUCK!

BOOM

I SAID TO GET OUT OF THE WAY.

AH, WHY'D YOU HAVE TO RUIN THE FUN THERE, MARI?

YOUR BOYS HERE HAVEN'T SHOWN ANY SPIRIT.

THIS ONE LOOKED TO BE MORE OF A CHALLENGE.

OH, JUST SHUT UP.

BOOM

NON-LETHAL ROUNDS? FOR ME?

I'M TOUCHED.

BUT I DON'T THINK YOU QUITE APPRECIATE WHAT I AM.

FUCK. FUCK. FUCK. FUCK.

KACHUNK

LOVE TO.

MAYBE AFTER?

WHY DON'T YOU PICK ON SOMEBODY A THIRD OF YOUR OWN SIZE?

HURK!

FEEL FREE TO PASS OUT ANY TIME NOW.

I WANT HIM ALIVE IF YOU CAN.

WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL?

FUCK THE GIRL.

STOP THE FUCKING MONSTER!

BOOM

YOU BITCH!

GURRRK

RRRAAAHAHAH!

SHIT.

AH, YOU BASTARDS. YOU THINK THAT'S ENOUGH?

FOR COLIN BEANE?

AN INSULT-- THAT'S WHAT IT IS!

I SAID--

YEAH, TO HELL WITH TAKING HIM ALIVE.

AND I QUIT.

OKAY, SO WE DON'T END THIS TODAY.

STOP SHOOTING. YOU'RE ALL FIRED.

HEH. YOU KNOW, THAT WAS ALMOST FUN.

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, MARI!

WHY AREN'T YOU CHASING THEM?

WHAT PART OF "WE QUIT" ARE YOU NOT CLEAR ON?

OR YOU FIRING US?

MORECI SECURITIES WILL SEND YOU OUR FINAL BILL.

YOU CANNOT BEGIN TO PAY ME ENOUGH TO FIGHT GIANT MONSTERS AND CRAZY VAMPIRES, NO MATTER HOW HOT.

PAY?

TO FIGHT MONSTERS?

DAMN IT, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL MY LIFE?

I'VE BEEN DOING IT FOR FREE.

WHO *ARE* YOU?

I'M CASSIE HACK.

I KILL MONSTERS.

YOU KNOW MY FRIEND-- VLAD.

VLAD?

YOU MEAN, *VLAD* VLAD?

TALL GUY, GAS MASK, TALKS FUNNY?

YEAH, *VLAD* VLAD. HE NEEDS YOUR HELP.

AND I'M THINKING THAT YOU COULD USE OURS, TOO.

I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP.

YEAH...

...YOU'VE CLEARLY GOT THINGS UNDER CONTROL HERE.

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE TINY ONE IS ORANGE.

AND WHAT KIND OF NAME IS SNOOKI?

WE CAME BACK BECAUSE...

...WE NEED TO FIND HIS FAMILY.

YOU THINK THE BEANES ARE HIS FAMILY?

MS. MARI!

WHAT IS THIS? HE'S A FUCKING CRIPPLE.

I DON'T NEED A CRIPPLE.

...NOT THIS.

IF YOU CAN STOP, FOR ONE SINGLE MINUTE, BEING A COMPLETE BITCH TO THE GUY WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE, I WILL TELL YOU WHAT'S GOING ON.

FIRST, THOUGH, HOW ABOUT YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP AND HELP?

I NEED VLAD THE MEATMAN, VLAD THE MONSTER WHO TOOK APART THE BEANE SISTERS LIKE THEY WERE MADE OF WET CARDBOARD...

:OOOOFFF:

I AM SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU, MARI.

YEAH.

I LIKE YOUR HAIR. LIKE A BOY!

UH, THANKS.

I--I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I SAID. AND THAT YOU'RE SICK.

I DIDN'T MEAN...

SO, YEAH, VLAD IS SICK.

WE NEED TO FIND HIS FAMILY TO--

THE BUTCHER *IS* FAMILY.

--HIS *BIOLOGICAL* FAMILY TO GET HIM BETTER.

YOU'RE SURE THE BEANES ARE HIS FAMILY?

WE WEREN'T SURE BEFORE. VLAD DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIS PARENTS.

BUT I'M SURE NOW.

YOU DIDN'T NOTICE A SLIGHT FAMILY RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN VLAD AND THE BIG GUY BACK THERE, WHEN YOU WERE SHOOTING AT ME?

SHOOTING AT HER?

I WASN'T SHOOTING AT *HER!* I WAS SHOOTING AT *HIM.*

BESIDES, THEY WEREN'T LETHAL ROUNDS.

THEY STILL FUCKING HURT.

I DO NOT LIKE IT WHEN PEOPLE SHOOT CASSANDRA.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO.

THAT WHOLE THING JUST WENT SOUTH AS SOON AS COLIN SHOWED UP.

WHO'S THAT--THE BIG GUY?

YES.

COLIN BEANE.

BRONSON BEANE'S SON AND HEIR APPARENT.

BUT I WAS EXPECTING *SHANDY.* HER, WE COULD HAVE HANDLED.

BRONSON DOESN'T SEND COLIN OUT VERY OFTEN.

I GUESS I SHOULD BE FLATTERED.

APPARENTLY, I'M AN ACTUAL THREAT NOW.

AH, SO YOU WERE SETTING A TRAP.

YEAH. I LAUNCHED THE BLOG TO EXPOSE THE BEANES AFTER THEY KILLED MY DAD AND TOOK OVER HIS TERRITORY.

THE BEANES STARTED KILLING ANYONE WHO WORKED FOR ME, SO I STARTED FIGHTING BACK MORE DIRECTLY.

WE'VE BEEN STALEMATED FOR MONTHS.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE BEANES ARE, AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF MONEY.

I WAS GETTING USED TO THE IDEA OF YOU AND VLAD HELPING ME OUT.

I'VE HEARD ABOUT A SHIPMENT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HIJACKING.

BUT WITH VLAD LIKE THIS...

DON'T WORRY.

VLAD IS GOING TO BE KICKING ASS AND TAKING NAMES IN ABOUT FIVE MINUTES.

THIS STUFF WILL HAVE HIM AT FULL STRENGTH FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OR SO. PLENTY OF TIME TO DO WHAT WE NEED TO DO.

IF YOU IDIOTS DON'T GET THIS UNLOADED SOON, I AM GOING TO GET BORED.

AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WE EVER DID FIND ALL OF BOB'S BITS AFTER THE LAST TIME I GOT BORED.

HEY, DID ANY OF YOU HEAR...

...SOMETHING--?

STEVE?

YOU OKA--?

=URGG=

THUNK

NOPE.

AH, THE GIRL.

MY BROTHER WAS QUITE TAKEN WITH YOU.

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING A NICE LONG TALK WITH HIM.

PREFERABLY WITH PLIERS.

SO...

...YOU'D BE THE PRODIGAL, THEN?

YOU ARE COMING WITH US.

I WAS HOPING *YOU'D* COME WITH *US.*

WE'RE FAMILY, VLAD, AND FAMILY BELONGS TOGETHER.

YOU ARE NOT MY FAMILY.

SURELY YOU WOULDN'T HIT YOUR AUNTIE?

AND A GIRL, AT THAT.

NO...

THUNK

...BUT SHE WOULD.

SOON.

SHE'S FAKING.

I COULD SHOOT HER.

I WONDER IF MY CAR INSURANCE COVERS BULLET HOLES?

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.

I THINK I'M STILL GOING TO SHOOT HER.

PLEASE DO NOT SHOOT HER.

OH, FINE.

SEE?

HE DOES LOVE HIS DEAR AUNTIE.

OH, JUST FUCK OFF.

HAH. I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS TAKEN DOWN BY THE LIKES OF YOU.

COLIN WILL NEVER LET ME LIVE IT DOWN.

IS BEING CHAINED UP IN THE BACK OF HER VAN NOT PROOF ENOUGH FOR YOU THAT WE CAN HANDLE YOUR TYPE ANY DAY OF THE WEEK?

I SUPPOSE YOU THINK YOU'VE WON.

NOT YET.

WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU SOMEPLACE FAR FROM PRYING EYES AND LISTENING EARS, SO WE CAN FIND OUT EXACTLY WHERE YOU CALL HOME, SHANDY.

POOR LITTLE MARI. YOU'RE GOING TO END UP IN CHUNKS JUST LIKE YOUR PAPA.

MY FATHER IS GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE.

YOU LITTLE CU--

NO, DON'T DO IT.

LET ME.

HAH HAHA HA HAHAHAH!

YOU REALLY DON'T GET HOW DEEP IN THE TOILET YOU ARE, DO YOU?

DON'T YOU THINK IT WAS ODD MY BOYS DIDN'T HAVE ANY GUNS?

NO.

DAMNIT. NO!

FUCK!

WHAT?

A BUG.

THERE HAS TO BE-- SHIT, THERE IT IS.

THEY'RE TRACKING HER, IT'S A...

"...TRAP!!"

CRNNNNCH

CRUNK

DAMN IT.

=UGH= EVERYONE STILL IN ONE PIECE?

WE MEET AGAIN.

I MISSED YOU.

I HAVE THAT EFFECT ON ALL THE HORRIBLE PSYCHOPATHS.

=URFFF=

CASSANDRA?

MARI?

I DO LOVE A DATE THAT PLAYS ALONG.

THE DREGS OF THIS CITY RARELY PUT UP ANY SORT OF DECENT FIGHT.

BARELY WORTH MY TIME.

CASSANDRA, HOLD ON!

OF COURSE, IT'D BE EASIER ON YOU IF YOU WOULDN'T STRUGGLE, BUT I DON'T FIGURE YOU FOR THE TYPE, THANK CHRIST.

DOES ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY EVER STOP TALKING?

RRRRRRR.

RRRRGGHH!

NOW, DON'T GO INTERRUPTING MY BROTHER.

HE GETS SO GRUMPY WHEN HIS PLAY TIME IS SPOILED.

VLAD, YOU OKAY?

PAY ATTENTION.

I DON'T WANT THIS TO END PREMATURELY.

KILL... YOU.

NO, I DON'T THINK SO.

CARE TO TRY AGAIN?

FUCK YEAH.

FUCKING FUCKER!

THERE WE GO.

NIGHTY-NIGHT, DEAR NEPHEW.

NON-LETHAL, BUT NOT, ALAS, NON-PAINFUL.

BLAM

NO!

THWOK

=OOOOFFF=

LOOK, COLIN: A SOUVENIR.

SHE WAS MINE!

FATHER SAID TO BRING THEM ALL.

IF YOU SNACK NOW, YOU'LL HAVE NO APPETITE WHEN IT'S TIME FOR DINNER.

TUMP

THE BEANE ESTATE.

TAKE IT OFF.

VLAD, SAY HELLO...

...TO YOUR GRANDFATHER.

HELLO, LAD. MY NAME IS BRONSON BEANE AND I AM VERRA HAPPY TO MEET YE.

WE HA' MUCH TO TALK ABOUT.

WHERE IS CASSANDRA? WHERE IS MARI?

OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THA'. YOUR FRIENDS WILL BE JOINING US SHORTLY...

"...FOR DINNER."

TO BE CONTINUED!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

OH, I AM JUST A SIMPLE MAN, AND I DINNAE UNDERSTAND MUCH.

BUT THIS--?

THIS, I UNDERSTAND, MISS.

NO.

ARE YE DONE BEGGING THEN, MISS?

YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, MISTER BEANE.

MISTER BEANE, YOU MISUNDERSTAND...

NO.

...I WASN'T BEGGING YOU.

I WAS *WARNING* YOU.

I BELIEVE IN FAIR PLAY.

STAY BACK! I DINNAE CARE WHAT YE ARE.

YOU DON'T WANT TO RUN? TO BEG?

TO PLEAD FOR YOUR LIFE?

TO HELL WITH THA'!

YOU'RE NOT LIKE MOST MEN, ARE YOU, ALEXANDER?

PERHAPS I SHALL GRANT YOU A BOON, THEN.

"AT FIRST, OUR ANCESTOR THOUGHT THA' HIS NIGHT OF PLEASURE WAS HIS REWARD, AND FAIR ENOUGH.

"AND THEN HE THOUGHT THA' IF HE HADNAE *IMBIBED* QUITE SO MANY SPIRITS, HE WOULDNAE BE *SEEING* SPIRITS.

"BUT SHE, WHATE'ER SHE WAS, WAS REAL. AND HER BOON? SAWNEY SOON FOUND OUT WHAT THA' TRULY WAS.

"HER BOON WAS POWER. THE POWER TO TAKE. THE POWER TO KILL. SHE MADE HIM BETTER. SHE MADE HIM MORE THAN A MAN.

"OF COURSE, THA' POWER CAME WITH CERTAIN ***DIETARY REQUIREMENTS.***

"THA' NE'ER BOTHERED SAWNEY.

"EVENTUALLY HE DECIDED IT'D BE SELFISH TO KEEP ALL THA' POWER TO HIMSELF, SO SAWNEY TOOK A WIFE.

"WHEN HE SAW HIS GOLDEN DAUGHTERS, HE KNEW THA' HE HAD TO KEEP THE BLOOD STRONG.

"AND SO THE BEANES PASSED INTO MYTH AND LEGEND. BUT THE BLOOD DID REMAIN STRONG..."

...AS YE CAN CLEARLY SEE FROM MY DEAREST DAUGHTER AND SON.

OR RATHER, HER SON.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

DEAR BROTHER DOESN'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU POINT OUT HE IS ALSO MY DEAR BOY.

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I SUPPOSE NOT.

COLIN HERE IS SAWNEY COME AGAIN, SAYS FATHER.

I DO NOT CARE.

YOU CAN CONTINUE TO FUCK YOURSELVES.

I WILL NOT BE INVOLVED IN YOUR MADNESS.

ALSO, I AM GOING TO KILL YOU ALL.

AH, WELL, THA'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG.

YE ARE SICK, VLAD, BECAUSE YE HAVENAE BEEN EATING A PROPER DIET.

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF EATING ANYONE.

I AM NOT A MONSTER.

IF YOU DON'T EAT YOUR VITTLES, YOU WON'T GROW TO BE BIG AND STRONG LIKE COLIN.

SO EAT UP.

NO.

AH, I SEE THA' BUTCHER OF YOURS RAISED YE SOFT. JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER.

BUT YOU'VE DONE QUITE WELL, DESPITE THA'.

YOU'D BE A FINE ADDITION TO OUR BREEDING STOCK.

SO HAVE A BITE AND COME HOME TO YOUR FAMILY.

NO.

AH. THAT'S THE WRONG ANSWER.

I AM NOT GOING TO JOIN YOU.

YOU ARE **NOT** FAMILY.

CAN I KILL HIM NOW, THEN?

HAH. NOT JUST YET. I EXPECTED AS MUCH FROM THE LIKES OF HIM.

IT'S THE BAD BLOOD.

I--

GURKKK!

PtOoo

AH, LAD, YE SHOULDNAE WASTE YOUR FOOD.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.

SINCE YE WON'T JOIN US READILY, I'LL MAKE YE AN OFFER.

I AM NOT INTERESTED.

OH, I THINK YE ARE.

THE OFFER IS THIS: FIGHT COLIN HERE.

IF YE WIN, YE CAN LEAVE.

WHAT ABOUT CASSANDRA AND MARI?

AH, RIGHT. THA'.

SHANDY DEAR, GO START PREPARATIONS FOR THE MAIN COURSE.

I WANT TO WATCH.

YE ALWAYS DO. GO.

I SUGGEST, VLAD, THA' IF YE WANT THE GIRLS RELATIVELY INTACT, SAY YES.

OF COURSE, IF YOU'D RATHER ABSTAIN, COLIN CAN SLIT YOUR THROAT RIGHT HERE.

TRUTH BE TOLD, IT DOESNAE MATTER MUCH TO ME WHICH OPTION YE CHOOSE. YE AND THE LITTLE WHORES ARE DEAD EITHER WAY.

SO WHAT SAY YE?

YES.

OH, MAN. I REALLY NEED TO STOP DRINKING ON WEEKDAYS.

WELL, HELL.

MARI? YOU STILL WITH ME?

BECAUSE I COULD USE A HAND HERE IF YOU'RE NOT DEAD.

OKAY. DEAD CHICK. TIED UP. HALF-EATEN CORPSES. NO VLAD, NO WEAPONS.

ON THE UPSIDE, I'VE STILL GOT ALL MY PARTS.

WHICH IS NICE.

UNNNN!

HOLY FUCKITYFUCK! YOU'RE ALIVE.

AHHHHHHH!

MARI, IT'S CASSIE! STOP SCREAMING. I'M ON YOUR SIDE.

ACTUALLY, SHE'S PROBABLY SCREAMING ABOUT ME.

I SAID FATHER WAS GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE, MARIANTHA.

I DIDN'T SAY IT WOULD BE ALL AT ONCE. SO I'LL LET YOU CHOOSE.

WHAT'S NEXT ON THE MENU?

PERHAPS THE OTHER EYE, SO YOU CAN'T SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU.

HEY, BITCH!

HOW ABOUT YOU COME OVER HERE AND SEE IF YOU CAN CHEW WHAT YOU BITE OFF?

FAIR ENOUGH. YOU LOOK PRETTY DELICIOUS.

AND I CAN ALWAYS HAVE MARI FOR LEFTOVERS.

GET OFF ME!

YOU'RE NOT EVEN SORT OF MY TYPE.

MMMMM.

THAT'S-- YOU HAVE THE *BLACK BLOOD.*

IT'S SO...

...*SWEET!*

I AM NOT A DAMN--

--*JUICEBOX!*

I NEED IT!

LET GO OF ME.

LET ME!

LET...

ME...

SO, YOU WANT TO GO KILL THE REST OF THEM NOW?

...

YES.

LIKE THE BALLROOM?

WE HAVE SURPRISINGLY FEW BALLS THESE DAYS, SO IT'S GOOD TO BE GETTING SOME USE OUT OF THE ROOM.

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE READY THEN?

HAH. DO YOU WANT ME TO WEAR A BLINDFOLD SO THAT THIS LASTS MORE THAN A MINUTE?

OVERCONFIDENCE DOESNAE BECOME YE, BOY.

MERELY STATING A FACT, FATHER.

HRRRM.

I'LL OFFER ONCE MORE, AND ONLY ONCE: STAY WITH US. YE CANNAE BEAT COLIN, BUT YE HAVE POTENTIAL. SHAME TO WASTE THA'.

THE BUTCHER WAS FAMILY. CASSANDRA IS FAMILY.

YOU?

YOU ARE JUST ANOTHER MONSTER.

I KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MONSTERS.

BLAH BLAH BLAH. YES, WE GET IT. MONSTERS, EVIL, ETCETERA. CAN WE PLEASE GET THIS GOING?

I'VE WAITED FAR TOO LONG FOR MY NEXT DATE WITH THE GIRL.

AYE, I SUPPOSE WE OUGHT TO.

SHAME SHANDY ISNAE BACK YET.

SHE DOES ENJOY THIS SORT OF THING.

BEFORE YE GO, LAD, I FEEL I'D BE DOING YE A DISFAVOR IF I DIDNAE TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

YOU...

HAH, NO.

YOUR MOTHER--WELL, SHE HAD A SOFT HEART.

I KEPT HER AWAY FROM THE REAL BUSINESS OF THE FAMILY.

SHE WAS MORE COMFORTABLE BEHIND A CALCULATOR THAN A KNIFE.

"YOUR DA' WORKED FOR ME. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO HIRE HIS KIND, BUT HE HAD A GOOD REPUTATION. HE ALSO HAD AN EYE FOR PRETTY YOUNG BLONDES.

"AFTER SHE FOUND OUT THEY WERE HAVING YE, THEY TRIED TO LEAVE THE FAMILY. COULDNAE HAVE THA'. HE DIED BEGGING, YE KNOW..."

...AND THEY THREW YE AWAY AS SOON AS THEY GOT A LOOK AT YE.

I GUESS EVEN FOOLS AND COWARDS CAN SEE THE TRUTH.

NO!

NO.

HAHAHAHA.

AH, TEMPER.

WELL?

BETTER.

NOT GOOD, MIND, BUT BETTER.

DIE!

THIS IS THE END OF YOU.

=OOOOF=

IS IT NOW?

WELL, LET'S SEE.

YOU'RE GOOD WITH THESE BLADES, YEAH?

AND YOU'RE STRONG TOO.

=HRRRG=

NO, YOU ARE. GIVE YOURSELF SOME CREDIT.

THE BEANE SEED IS POWERFUL, EVEN IN A HALF-BREED LIKE YOU.

ALAS...

...NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

ONCE AGAIN, NEVER LEARNING TO TIE A PROPER SHOELACE KNOT PROVES TO BE A WINNING STRATEGY.

SUCK IT, MOM.

MARI, YOU STILL FIRED UP? BECAUSE I COULD REALLY USE *KILLS-WITH-HER-TEETH MARI*, NOT *VEGETABLE MARI*.

SHE TOOK MY EYE.

YOU TOOK HER JUGULAR. SEEMS LIKE A FAIR TRADE.

NOW...

...THE TRICKY PART.

I TOTALLY NEED TO THANK LISA FOR THOSE PILATES DVDS.

DOES IT HURT?

...

RIGHT, SORRY.

SWEET, I GOT WHAT I NEED.

LET'S GO.

I GUESS THE BEANES DON'T LIKE SERVANTS IN THE HOUSE.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?

NO.

TERRIFIC.

OH, SWEET.

COME TO MAMA.

THESE ARE MINE.

MARI, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD BE DO--

THESE ARE *MINE*.

OOOOOKAY.

AND I WANT MORE THAN ONE JUGULAR IN RETURN.

ENOUGH!

NICELY DONE.

BUT COMING AT ME WHILE MY BACK IS TURNED?

HARDLY SPORTING.

CRUNCH

RMMMMM.

RRRRRRRRRR.

FUCK! THAT STINGS, YOU KNOW.

SLITCH

TIME TO GET SERIOUS.

YES. IT IS TIME TO END THIS.

FUNNY...

...THAT'S JUST WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY.

STOP GIGANTOR McUGGO, OLD MAN, OR GET A SECOND SMILE.

ERMMM.

THERE WE GO.

FUCKNUTS. I SAID--

YES...

...I HEARD YOU.

SONOFABITCH!

NNNRRAAAWRR!

HEH. ATTACKING THE WEAK OLD MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR, EH?

CASSANDRA!

I DINNAE CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE CHICAGO UNDERWORLD ON MY LOOKS AND PLEASANT DISPOSITION ALONE, GIRL.

=HURK=

BASTARD!

YES. I AM A BASTARD.

AND IF THIS IS FAMILY, THEN I AM HAPPY TO BE A BASTARD.

I AM GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS SO HARD YOU'LL NEED TWO DAMN WHEELCHAIRS.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY.

FUCKING LOSER.

THE BUTCHER TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS.

HOW TO BE A MAN. HOW TO BE GOOD.

AND OF COURSE...

...HOW TO CUT.

SLLL

THE BUTCHER SHOWED ME TO USE THE BLADES.

HE TAUGHT ME TO USE THEM TO MOVE MY BODY.

PLEASE...

NO. I FORBID THIS. YOU CANNAE KILL HIM.

YOU WILLNAE.

SHLURK

TO EASE THE PAIN.

NO! I...I WILL...

TUMP

HOW ABOUT A BIG OL' CAN OF...

...SHUT THE FUCK UP!

KRAK

STUPID CANNIBALS WITH THEIR STUPID HUNGER, TRYING TO EAT ME.

I SWEAR I WILL POUND YOU UNTIL YOU NEED A--

THWOK THWOK THWOK

CASSANDRA.

DO NOT KILL HIM.

THE FUCKER WAS GOING TO EAT ME.

WE NEED HIM.

RIGHT.

SHIT.

FINE.

AND I DO NOT NEED TO KILL HIM.

I GET THAT.

BUT I WANT TO KILL HIM.

KILL... KILL YOU.

REALLY WANT TO KILL HIM.

A MAN...A *GREAT* MAN... ONCE SAID WE DO NOT ALWAYS GET WHAT WE WANT.

BUTCHER.

YOU WANT TO KILL HIM, BUT YOU DON'T NEED IT.

MICK JAGGER?

WE CAN'T LET HIM LIVE.

HE'S STILL GOT FUCK-TONS OF MONEY AND, YOU KNOW, A CRIMINAL EMPIRE.

I DID NOT SAY THAT HE WOULD LIVE.

I NOW HAVE THE BLOOD FROM HIM WE CAME TO GET.

MARI?

FEEL FREE TO SCREAM, OLD MAN.

HAVE FUN.

ARE YOU SURE YOU FEEL ALRIGHT?

THE DOCTOR WITH THE FUNNY EYE SAID I SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY MORE DIFFICULTIES.

AND YOU DON'T FEEL THE URGE TO CONSUME ME OR ANYTHING?

NO.

YOU WOULD BE TOO STRINGY, I THINK.

I SEE THE SERUM CAME WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR.

THIS IS HIM?

YEAH, ONCE WE FOUND OUT HOW HE DIED AND WHEN, IT WAS PRETTY EASY FOR CHRIS TO TRACK HIM DOWN.

HELLO, FATHER.

DO YOU NEED TO BE ALONE OR ANYTHING?

I AM FINE, CASSANDRA.

IT IS GOOD TO KNOW WHERE YOU COME FROM.

ROBERT LUCAS

1956-1985

BUT MORE IMPORTANT, I THINK, TO KNOW ***WHO YOU ARE.***

I AM NOT A BEANE. I AM NOT A MONSTER.

THEY ARE WHERE I COME FROM.

BUT THIS MAN, MY MOTHER, BUTCHER.

THEY ARE WHO I AM.

THAT'S IT?

YES.

WELL... OKAY.

GOOD.

YOU'RE IMAGINING ME AS A GIANT STEAK AREN'T YOU?

NO.

WELL, THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW.

GIANT HOT DOG.

THE END.

THE CASE OF THE KILLER AND QUESTING KING

HACK/SLASH #18A by **MATT MERHOFF**

MERHOFF

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

BZZZT

RRAAAAAHHH!!

AAAAHH! THE THING'S GOT HER!

I'M COMING, CHRIS!

I'M HERE! WHAT IS--?

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE.

OH, THE HORROR!

NOW THAT FURYSAURUS HAS BITTEN THE HEAD OFF THUNDER GUARD, WHO WILL DEFEND CASTLE DIAPER PAIL?

AND IF THE MONSTERS GET HOLD OF WHAT'S IN THERE--GOOD NIGHT, EMINENCE.

GOO!

YOU SCARED THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF ME, YOU KNOW.

THIS THING IS BROADCASTING.

I HEARD THE SCREAMING AND, WELL...

YEAH, SORRY. I GOT CARRIED AWAY.

I KNOW IT'S GEEK SACRILEGE, BUT THIS STUFF'S WAY MORE FUN OUT OF THE BOX.

I MIGHT EVEN BREAK OUT MY MINT--

GAH! NO, SANDRA. NOT IN YOUR MOUTH!

I'M STILL NOT WILD ABOUT YOUR CHOICE OF PLAYTHINGS FOR HER, BUT AT LEAST YOU DID AS I ASKED AND PUT AWAY ALL THE LITTLE SWORDS AND STUFF SHE COULD SWALLOW.

YOU PUT AWAY ALL THE LITTLE SWORDS AND STUFF, RIGHT?

DING DONG

OF COURSE I DID!

UH, IF THAT'S CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES, STALL 'EM SO I CAN GO OUT THE BACK.

IF THEY DIDN'T NAIL YOU FOR WATCHING ***TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD*** WITH HER ON THE DAY WE GOT HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL, YOU'RE PROBABLY SAFE NOW.

HI. CAN I HELP YOU?

I HOPE SO, YOUNG LADY.

I'M LOOKING FOR CATHERINE CURIO. I HAVE SOMETHING FOR HER.

NOTHING SERIOUS, I ASSURE YOU.

UH, THIS THING'S KIND OF HEAVY.

MIND IF I COME IN FOR A MINUTE AND CATCH MY BREATH?

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU LIKE THIS, BUT CATHERINE LISTED THIS AS HER MAILING ADDRESS.

SHE'S A SUBSCRIBER TO OUR COMPANY'S PUBLICATION: ***THE MYSTERY SOLVER'S CATALOG.***

SHE USED TO CHECK THE MAIL EVERY DAY FOR IT, LIKE THAT KID IN ***CHRISTMAS STORY*** WAITING FOR HIS ORPHAN ANNIE DECODER.

DID CAT WIN A CONTEST OR SOMETHING, MISTER...?

JOYCE. BRENDON MANNIX JOYCE, PRESIDENT OF ***B.M.J. ENTERPRISES.***

NOT EXACTLY A CONTEST. I WAS JUST ON MY WAY TO INDIANAPOLIS AND THOUGHT I'D SAY HI. WHEN MY DAD BROUGHT ME INTO THE BUSINESS, HE TAUGHT ME TO TREAT MY BEST CUSTOMERS LIKE FAMILY.

I HAVE A DISCOUNT COUPON FOR HER. LET ME GET THAT.

HERE YOU GO. OF COURSE, I'D BE HAPPY TO DELIVER IT IN PERSON, IF YOU COULD LET ME KNOW WHERE SHE IS.

SHE'D LOVE TO MEET YOU. SHE'S--

TRAVELING. BUT WE'LL MAKE SURE SHE GETS THE COUPON WHEN SHE GETS BACK.

I SHOULD GO. LOOKS LIKE THE LITTLE PRINCESS IS READY TO CALL IT A NIGHT.

SAW YOU FOLKS HAD A BAY-B-EAR MONITOR. QUALITY STUFF.

ME AND THE WIFE HAD ONE OF THEIR FIRST MODELS BACK IN THE SEVENTIES, FOR OUR LITTLE BOY.

WELL, G'NIGHT. GIVE MISS CURIO MY BEST.

OUT ALREADY. SHE REALLY WAS TIRED.

HEY, IT WAS NICE OF THE CATALOG GUY TO STOP BY LIKE THAT.

VLADIMIR'S

NICE? MORE LIKE WEIRD.

NOT UNDEAD-ANIMALS-ATTACKING-US WEIRD, BUT YOU THINK HE WOULD HAVE CALLED FIRST, INSTEAD OF DRIVING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.

WE'D BETTER WARN CAT, JUST TO BE SAFE.

I DON'T WANT TO SOUND PARANOID...

...BUT MISTER JOYCE SEEMS LIKE HE'S UP TO SOMETHING.

THE **B.M.J. BLACK CATALOG SIGNAL INTERCEPTOR** IS OVERKILL FOR THIS PART OF THE MISSION.

THOSE BAY-B-EAR MONITORS ARE AWFUL. NO SCRAMBLING, POOR SHIELDING. AND THEY'VE GOT THEM CRANKED UP SO HIGH I COULD PROBABLY LISTEN IN ON A CAR RADIO ACROSS THE STREET AND HEAR WHAT THEY SAY IN ANY ROOM.

BUT THE INTERCEPTOR ALSO WORKS WITH CELL PHONES, AND THAT WILL BE THEIR NEXT MOVE.

I'D BETTER CALL HER RIGHT NOW.

TARGET'S PHONE NUMBER AND CURRENT LOCATION ACQUIRED.

HI, CAT? LISA. LISTEN, THERE WAS SOMEONE HERE LOOKING FOR YOU, AND I THINK YOU SHOULD BE ON YOUR GUARD.

BMJ SPY GOODS

Customer Order Records:
Catherine Curio

"LIKE SHOOTING COMMIES IN THE KREMLIN," AS MY FATHER USED TO SAY.

RED-BAITING BASTARD THAT HE WAS.

GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

SNF
SNF

CRRNCH

RROOWWWGK!

NNNHH.

GRRRUUHH.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS BIOTECH CENTER.

URBANA, ILLINOIS.

SO IS THIS WHERE I'LL BE WORKING OR DO YOU HAVE SOMEPLACE WITH MORE UP-TO-DATE EQUIPMENT?

I'M SORRY, MISS CURIO.

OH, NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE. IT'S JUST THAT I'D READ ABOUT SOME OF THE NEWER-MODEL MICROSCOPES IN ***POPULAR SCIENCE*** AND I WAS HOPING TO USE THE LATEST AND GREATEST.

THESE WILL CERTAINLY DO THE JOB. JUST LET ME KNOW WHERE TO SET UP.

NO, I'M SORRY THAT I CAN'T LET YOU USE THE EQUIPMENT.

WHAT YOU'RE ASKING TO DO IS COMPLETELY AGAINST UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND LAB PROTOCOLS.

MY BROTHER TOLD ME HE STILL HAD FRIENDS HERE AND THEY COULD--

WAIT. HE TOLD YOU I WAS A RETARD, DIDN'T HE?

WHAT? NO!

ROBBIE SAID YOU WERE DOING SOME KIND OF RESEARCH. I TOLD HIM I COULD GET YOU A TOUR OF THE LAB.

LOOK, MAYBE I COULD RUN SOME TESTS FOR YOU.

FORGET IT. THIS IS DETECTIVE BUSINESS.

CONFIDENTIAL.

AND PROBABLY WAY OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE, IF YOU WERE EVER FRIENDS WITH MY DOPEY BROTHER.

JUST WAIT UNTIL DAD HEARS ABOUT--

OH, GREAT. NOW YOU SHOW UP.

THIS IS CAT, CALLING DOG. I REPEAT: THIS IS CAT, CALLING DOG.

YOUR FAVORITE FELINE HAS GROWN A TAIL.

Champaign INN

VACANCY

OPERATION BOY BLUE NOW IN EFFECT.

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, DOG.

Humble Pooch feels distinctly like an idiot enacting this plan.

And unlike Operation Sing a Song of Sixpence, there is not even delicious pie to be had when we are done.

THAT'S IT, STALKER-MAN. KEEP UP WITH ME.

MISTER POOCHIE-POOCHIE AND I HAVE A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR YOU.

CAT & DOG INVESTIGATIONS

H518P08

CURIO IS SLOW ENOUGH THAT I GLIMPSE HER DISAPPEARING INTO THE CORN.

SHE'S SETTING UP FOR AN AMBUSH.

I'VE COME PREPARED FOR THAT.

THE B.M.J. BLACK CATALOG COMBAT SIGHT.

THERMAL CAPABILITY. WORKS GREAT, DAY OR NIGHT.

AND THERE SHE IS. GONE TO GROUND ALREADY, ALL BY HERSELF.

FRANKLY, I EXPECT BETTER FROM B.M.J. CUSTOMERS.

WELL, LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

Mooo! Oh mooo!

WHAT THE--?

HA! GOTCHA, CREEP!

THWUD

H--UGH!

THESE ZIP-CUFFS STAY ON UNTIL WE'RE DONE WITH THE INTERROGATION, GOT IT?

Ever-helpful Pooch is hoping this interrogating will not require him to again mimic bovines or any other barnyard animals.

TOO SOON TO SAY FOR CERTAIN. LET'S SEE WHERE IT GOES.

LOOK, MISTER, THOSE I.D.s COULD BE FAKED.

IF YOU'RE THE ***REAL*** BRENDON JOYCE, EXPLAIN HOW YOU COULD HAVE FALLEN FOR THAT AMBUSH.

IT WAS CLEVER AND ALL, BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE ***KING OF SPIES!***

LIKE I SAID: I USED A SCOPE.

I SAW YOUR, *UH*, DOG AND HOMED IN ON HIM.

YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP AT ALL, THANKS TO THAT THERMAL BAFFLER. IT'S MILITARY-GRADE EQUIPMENT.

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD HAVE FORESEEN THAT.

HUH. I JUST THOUGHT I WAS HIDING UNDER A BLANKET.

I GRABBED IT FROM THE TECH LAB AT MONSTER BAIT STUDIOS BECAUSE I WANTED A COVER FOR THE FLIGHT HOME AND THOUGHT IT WAS KINDA COOL. I HAD NO IDEA.

OKAY. I'M CONVINCED.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I FOUGHT A DUEL OF WITS WITH THE KING OF SPIES-- AND IN AN EXPERIMENTAL CORNFIELD!

IT'S LIKE SOMETHING RIGHT OUT OF ***THE LEGUME THAT ATE LAHORE.***

THAT MOVIE HAS A PRETTY FAKEY MONSTER, OF COURSE. NOT NEARLY AS SCARY AS--

MISS CURIO, AREN'T YOU WONDERING WHY I WENT TO ALL THIS TROUBLE TO TRACK YOU DOWN?

BECAUSE YOU NEED MY HELP TO CRACK A CASE?

OH, TELL ME IT'S BECAUSE YOU NEED MY HELP TO CRACK A CASE!

NO. I'M HERE TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.

YOU'RE BEING STALKED BY A MANIAC, A GHOUL WHO GOES BY THE NAME OF...

"...THE *CATALOG KILLER.*

"HE STEALS A COMPANY'S MAILING LIST, THE INTERNAL ONE THAT TELLS HOW LONG SOMEONE HAS BEEN A SUBSCRIBER AND HOW MUCH THEY'VE ORDERED, AND THEN HE KILLS OFF THE MOST VALUED CUSTOMERS. BASHES THEIR HEADS IN.

"NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHY HE DOES IT. HE HATES CONSUMERS, MAYBE.

"I TRIED TALKING TO THE POLICE, BUT IT GOT ME NOWHERE. EVERY TIME THEY GET CLOSE, THE CATALOG KILLER VANISHES. IT'S LIKE HE'S SOME KIND OF PHANTOM.

"THAT'S WHY MY CUSTOMERS--WHY YOU--NEED MY HELP...

I THINK YOU MIGHT BE NEXT ON HIS LIST. YOU'RE ONE OF B.M.J.'S MOST VALUED PATRONS.

It is hard to imagine anyone above Mistress Cat on your patron list. So many packages. So much terrifying bubble wrap.

OH, DON'T BE SUCH A BABY. THAT WAS AN IMPORTANT BUOYANCY EXPERIMENT.

ANYWAY, FROM THE DESCRIPTION, IT SOUNDS LIKE THE KILLER COULD BE A MAILMAN GONE MAD. I'VE CERTAINLY SEEN THOSE BEFORE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST CALL ME AND WARN ME? IT COULD HAVE SAVED US ALL A LOT OF TROUBLE.

IF I ACT LIKE A STALKER, I CAN ASSESS YOUR SECURITY NEEDS.

IN YOUR CASE, YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY PREPARED. AND IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE SEEN AS MANY ***STRANGE THINGS*** AS I HAVE DURING MY HUNT FOR THE CATALOG KILLER.

THAT'S NOT TRUE OF EVERYONE, WHICH IS WHY I PLAYED IT SAFE WITH YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS OVER IN EMINENCE.

=urk=

HA! CHRIS AND LISA ARE EVEN HARDER TO FREAK OUT THAN I AM!

THEY'RE THE ONES I GOT MR. POOCHIE-POOCHIE FROM.

WELL, IT'S GREAT YOU UNDERSTAND.

BUT WE NEED TO GET YOU SOMEPLACE SAFER THAN THIS.

NO WAY. IF MY FRIENDS HAVE TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE BAD GUYS.

DETECTIVE'S LOG, NUMBER ONE-ZERO-ONE-TWO-FIVE:

THE CASE OF THE KILLER AND THE QUESTING KING!

OUTSIDE OF KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS.

WELL, POOP. IF NO ONE'S HERE, I'M SORRY WE LEFT POOCH BACK AT THE MOTEL.

NO, IT'S STILL FOR THE BEST.

IF SOMEONE SHOWS UP HERE, WE'LL HAVE A HARD ENOUGH TIME EXPLAINING OURSELVES, LET ALONE YOUR DOG.

CAT & DOG INVESTIGATIONS

PROFESSOR KAUFMANN IS JUST BELOW YOU ON TOTAL ORDERS FROM THE COMPANY.

WE'D BETTER GO IN AND LOOK AROUND.

WOW, LOOK AT ALL THAT GREAT STUFF! PARABOLIC AMPLIFIER. GLASS CUTTER.

OOOO. WHAT'S *THAT?*

AN EXPERIMENTAL TRACKING DEVICE. REAL JAMES BOND-TYPE GEAR, FROM MY PRIVATE CATALOG.

I USE IT TO KEEP TRACK OF DELIVERIES AND EVEN THE WHEREABOUTS OF SOME OF THE TOP B.M.J. MANAGEMENT.

THERE ARE PHONE APPS THAT CAN DO THAT SORT OF THING NOW, BUT THIS WAS REVOLUTIONARY FOR ITS TIME, BACK WHEN MY SON DESIGNED IT.

IS YOUR SON STILL CREATING COOL THINGS FOR YOU?

NO, HE'S... MOVED ON.

LOOK, WE SHOULD GET INSIDE.

THIS IS THE *B.M.J. BLACK CATALOG AUTOMATED LOCKSMITH.*

YOU DO THE HONORS.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT JOB WOULD BE BETTER THAN WORKING FOR B.M.J. AND DESIGNING THINGS FOR THE *THE MYSTERY SOLVER'S CATALOG.*

I'M THRILLED JUST TO SEE A PROTOTYPE. TO BE YOUR KID AND DESIGNING THIS STUFF--WOW.

THIS IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN A STANDARD-ISSUE PICK!

CATHERINE, THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. I CHECKED ON THE PROFESSOR LAST WEEK AND HE SAID HE'D BE AROUND.

I'LL LOOK UPSTAIRS. YOU HEAD TO THE BASEMENT.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.

BMI

SHEESH. THIS GUY DOES ORDER A LOT OF STUFF FROM THE CATALOG.

YOU'RE LUCKY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS NOT UP...

UGH!

WHUMP

...NOT YET, ANYWAY.

THWUD

ALL RIGHT, JOYCE, YOU FUCKER.

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN.

AND I'M TELLING YOU, *TURA SANTANA* WOULD HAVE KICKED *ALL* THEIR ASSES.

BZZZT BZZZT

VLAD? I KNOW CASSIE SAID I SHOULD ONLY CALL IF THERE'S AN EMERGENCY.

AND THAT I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE EMERGENCIES.

BUT, *PLEASE*, JUST PUT ME ON SPEAKER.

I WAS WORKING WITH SOMEONE AND HE'S BEEN TAKEN. I FOUND A CLUE THAT SHOULD HELP ME TO LOCATE HIM.

IF HE'S EVEN STILL ALIVE...

...BUT I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP.

SCREW YOUR LITTLE MYSTERIES, CAT. WE'RE ON THE TRAIL OF A REAL SICKO UP HERE. HE'S BEEN SLAUGHTERING AND GUTTING NURSES.

A *SLASHER* GRABBED MY FRIEND, TOO, MISS SELF-IMPORTANT!

THIS FRIEND OF MINE--HE'S THE KING OF SPIES, AND HE TRUSTED ME LIKE I WAS HIS KID.

YOU TWO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WANT TO HELP YOUR FATHER, RIGHT?!

"The pummeling and strife might have been avoided if you had brought brave Pooch along."

"I'M NOT LIKELY TO FORGET THAT IN THE FUTURE, PARTNER."

RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, WE NEED TO CRACK THE CODE ON THIS TRACKER.

I'VE GOT IT TO POWER UP, BUT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT EMPLOYEE NUMBER THE BOSS ASSIGNED HIMSELF.

IT'S NOT THE MOST OBVIOUS NUMBER.

EMPLOYEE ONE IS STATIONARY OUT IN NEW YORK, IN A GRAVEYARD, ACCORDING TO G.P.S. CROSS-REFERENCES.

B.M.J. WAS STARTED BY BRENDON'S FATHER, SO HE COULD HAVE ASSIGNED HIMSELF ***EMPLOYEE TWO***. NOPE. SAME SPOT IN NEW YORK.

THE KIDNAPPER COULD ONLY GET SO FAR IN A FEW HOURS. I CAN ENTER RANDOM NUMBERS AND SEE WHICH EMPLOYEES ARE WITHIN RANGE, BUT THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO FIGURE THIS OUT.

Mistress Lisa attached different meanings to the numbers one and two when she took me for walks.

GROSS, BUT YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

THE TRICK IS FIGURING OUT WHAT NUMBER HAS A SPECIAL MEANING FOR MISTER JOYCE.

OH, DURR! OF COURSE!

WHAT ELSE WOULD THE KING OF SPIES USE FOR HIMSELF ON THIS KIND OF "JAMES BOND GEAR"?

007

HEY, GUYS. IT TOOK ME A WHILE, BUT I FOUND HIM. YOU SAID YOU WERE IN KENOSHA, RIGHT?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO FAR. HE'S JUST SOUTH OF YOU, IN CHICAGO...

"...IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN OLD WAREHOUSE, FROM WHAT THE G.P.S. DATA SAYS."

YUP. LOOKS LIKE THE SAME GUY I FOUGHT.

FUNNY, I THOUGHT HE WAS A NUTJOB WHO DECIDED THE POST OFFICE WAS AN EVIL PLOT, NOT A REAL SLASHER.

WHATEVER. I'M MORE THAN HAPPY TO KICK HIS ASS AGAIN-- HARD.

DID YOU SEE THE FRIEND OF CATHERINE THE KILLER TOOK AWAY FROM HER?

NO, BUT THERE ARE SOME OFFICES ON THIS LEVEL ACROSS THE WAREHOUSE. BET OUR MISSING NOVELTY SALESMAN IS IN THERE.

I WONDER IF THIS KING OF SPIES SELLS THE X-RAY SPECS.

I KEEP TELLING YOU: YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO USE YOUR IMAGINATION WHEN YOU GAWK AT WOMEN, LIKE A NORMAL PERV.

NOW GET GOING ALONG THE WALKWAY AND CHECK OUT THE OTHER OFFICES. I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON MISTER ZIP.

IT IS GOOD TO HEAR CASSANDRA JOKE...

...THERE HAS BEEN TOO MUCH ANGER IN HER SINCE THE JUNGLE.

ZAK

SHIT. THERE GO THE LIGHTS.

GUESS IT'S NOW OR NEVER.

SURPRISE, ASSHOLE!

JEEZ. AT LEAST MAKE THIS A CHALLENGE.

HUH? WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON HERE?

PLEASE! I'M SORRY I HIT THE GIRL THAT HARD!

I'M SORRY I ORDERED ALL THAT STUFF AND COULDN'T PAY!

B.M.J. BLACK CATALOG COMBAT SIGHT.

GOD. SHE'S EVEN MORE UNHINGED THAN LAST TIME.

RRAAAAAARRGH!

OH NO.

KRRSH

KDOW

I'LL JUST RETURN IT ALL. EVERY LAST BOX!

VLAD?

HERE IS THE KING OF SPIES.

HE TRIED TO COOK ME WITH A DOOR KNOB AND WAS READYING TO SHOOT YOU WHEN I FOUND HIM.

HIS GUN IS NOW BROKEN.

SWELL. I'M SURE HE CAN TELL US ABOUT THAT POOR BASTARD WHO JUST RAN OFF.

HE WASN'T A SLASHER. HE WASN'T EVEN THE GUY I TOOK DOWN A FEW YEARS AGO.

YOU HAVE EXACTLY ONE MINUTE TO SPILL YOUR GUTS.

THE MAN IN THE COSTUME WAS NAMED KAUFMANN.

I TOLD HIM I'D CLEAR THE DEBT HE'D ACCRUED WITH B.M.J. IF HE HELPED ME SCARE SOME CRIMINALS WHO'D BEEN THREATENING ME.

THE CATALOG KILLER YOU MET BEFORE WAS SOMEONE ELSE.

MY SON, BUCKLEY.

HE WAS A MONSTER. MY FATHER TURNED HIM INTO ONE.

"MY FATHER GREW UP AFRAID OF THE SOVIETS. HE CARRIED HIS HATRED OF THEM LIKE A DISEASE--A PLAGUE HE SPREAD WHEREVER AND WHENEVER HE COULD.

"BEFORE HE DIED, THE MISERABLE OLD BASTARD INFECTED MY SON.

"BUT BUCKLEY DIDN'T JUST RANT ABOUT COMMIES. HE STOLE MAILING LISTS AND STARTED KILLING PEOPLE WHO ORDERED 'SUSPECT' THINGS FROM CATALOGS: SEX TOYS, COPIES OF ***THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO***, EVEN SOME OF THE SPY GEAR SOLD BY B.M.J.

"MY LOVE WASN'T ENOUGH TO SAVE HIM, TO STOP HIM FROM HURTING OTHERS.

"BUT YOU DIDN'T FAIL. I KNOW. I WAS THERE WHEN YOU KILLED HIM.

I WISHED THAT HAD BEEN THE END OF IT, BUT I SAW THAT DAY THAT YOU WERE A CREATURE OF HATRED LIKE MY FATHER. A MONSTER LIKE MY SON. AND I VOWED TO STOP YOU.

BUT YOU VANISHED AS I CRADLED MY DYING BOY IN MY ARMS, JUST AS YOU WOULD VANISH EVERY TIME I GOT CLOSE TO YOU IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS SINCE.

I COULD TRACK YOU TO A GENERAL AREA, BUT NEVER TO A PLACE WHERE I COULD END YOU.

THE SOLUTION LAY IN LOCATING YOUR ASSOCIATES, YOUR FRIENDS. ONE IN PARTICULAR CAUGHT MY ATTENTION.

SHE'D WRITTEN A LETTER TO MY COMPANY YEARS AGO.

I USED TO USE IT IN SALES CALLS.

Dear BMJ,

My name is Catherine C
twelve years old. I rec
the BMJ Spy Lab Parab
for my birthday. It he
the Case of the Lunch
and also has been use
things that my brothe
parents that have turn
less than true. I was wondering

WHEN I LEARNED LAST WEEK THAT YOU WERE IN THE MIDWEST, I FOUND MISS CURIO AND TRICKED HER INTO GETTING YOU TO A SPECIFIC SPOT. HERE.

I KNEW THE RUSE HAD TO BE ELABORATE OR NONE OF YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN DUPED.

YOU BLACKMAILED SOME POOR SLOB INTO BEATING UP A GIRL WITH A MALLET AND THEN HAD HIM STAND AROUND HERE WAITING TO GET THE SHIT KICKED OUT OF HIM?

YOU FUCKING TRICKED SOMEONE WHO WROTE YOU A FAN LETTER AS A LITTLE GIRL, THEN MADE HER HELP YOU TRACK DOWN HER FRIENDS SO YOU COULD MURDER THEM?

AND YOU'RE CALLING *ME* A MONSTER?

CASSANDRA. PLEASE.

YOU KNOW THAT I AM TIRED OF BEING CALLED A MONSTER, TOO...

BUT WE DO NOT WANT TO KILL A FATHER, ESPECIALLY ONE WHO IS TRYING TO FIGHT THE THINGS IN THE DARK AND HAS A FAULT OF LOVING HIS SON TOO MUCH.

I THINK HE NEEDS TO SEE WHY HE IS WRONG ABOUT YOU.

MONSTERS DO NOT SHOW MERCY, OF COURSE. AND THEY DO NOT FIGHT FOR OTHERS.

KISS IT

CASSIE HACK AND VLAD SHOW ME THE ONES THEY FIGHT FOR. THE PEOPLE THEY SAVE...

AND THE PEOPLE THEY CANNOT.

I KNOW NOW THAT THEY ARE NOT LIKE MY FATHER OR MY SON. THEY HAVE FRIENDS WHO TRULY LOVE THEM.

AND DEVOTED IF... **CHALLENGED** ALLIES, WHO DESERVE MY APOLOGIES AND MY ASSISTANCE.

BMJ SPY GOODS

BLACK CATALOG

TO KEEP DOING THEIR GOOD WORK, ALL OF THEM WILL NEED TO KEEP HIDDEN.

THE BAD GUIDE TO INTERNET INVINCIBILITY

SO I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO ERASE THE KINDS OF TRACKS I USED TO FIND THEM.

Google 'Hack/Slash Inc.'

Hack/Slash Inc News and Updates

About
About stats, data and information about the adventures of Cassie and Vlad ...

BECAUSE THERE ARE BAD THINGS OUT THERE HUNTING FOR CASSIE HACK AND VLAD AND THEIR FRIENDS.

Hack/Slash Inc

FAR WORSE THAN ME. THINGS THAT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO PULL THE TRIGGER.

MAYBE I CAN HELP SHIELD THEM FROM THOSE **TRUE MONSTERS** AND KEEP THEM SAFE...

...EVEN IF ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

THE END.

HACK/SLASH/REPEAT

HACK/SLASH #19A by **TIM SEELEY**

WHY... DON'T YOU DIE ALREADY?!

DIE!

DIE!

DIE!

JUST STAY DEAD...

UM... CASSANDRA?

WE CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS.

WE CAN'T KEEP KILLING THIS BASTARD, RUNNING FROM THE POLICE, THEN TRACKING HIM DOWN SO WE CAN KILL HIM AGAIN.

GET YOUR MACHETES. WE'RE TAKING THIS THING'S ARMS AND LEGS, AND MAILING THEM TO INDIA.

WE HAVE ALREADY REMOVED HIS LIMBS.

THEN WE'LL DO IT AGAIN!

ONLY THIS TIME WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE SOMETHING *EXTRA.*

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT SNAKES SHOULD WORK HERE, TOO:

"CUT OFF THE HEAD."

CASSANDRA, YOU MIGHT NOT BE THINKING STRAIGHT.

OH YEAH? AND WHY'S THAT?

GO AHEAD, SAY IT.

I KNOW YOU'RE DYING TO.

I THINK THAT MAYBE THIS SLASHER HAS GOTTEN TO YOU.

REALLY?

THE PAST EIGHTEEN HOURS HAS BEEN MY LIFE, COMPRESSED INTO ONE HORRIFYING *GROUNDHOG DAY:*

KILL, EVADE, REPEAT.

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE THIS IS TROUBLING!

YEAH, RIGHT. YOU JUST THINK I'M ALL WET AND EAGER TO CUT OFF SOMEONE'S--

SNAP

WHAT WAS THAT?

YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT RUNNING AND YOU'LL FIND OUT HOW GOOD OUR BULLETS ARE AT CHASING DOWN PERPS.

WHATEVER. JUST TAKE US IN. WE COULD USE A BREAK WHILE YOU GUYS DEAL WITH THIS.

WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN.

DEPUTY BLAKE, PLEASE TAKE OUR SUSPECTS INTO CUSTODY.

NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE--

AW, DAMN IT.

LISTEN TO ME, SANDERS.

I WANT YOU TO ACCOMPANY THE MEDICAL EXAMINER ON THE TRANSPORT.

UNDERSTOOD?

YES, SIR.

THEN, MAKE SURE THAT THE M.E. KNOWS TO KEEP THIS BODY LOCKED IN COLD STORAGE AT ALL TIMES.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE CORPSE TO BE REMOVED FROM STORAGE.

NO CIRCUMSTANCES.

YOU GOING TO SET UP THE INTERROGATION ROOM FOR OUR TWO SUSPECTS?

Sheri

SUSPECTS? ALL I HAVE ARE TWO GUILTY PARTIES.

JUST A MATTER OF A JUDGE HAMMERING DOWN HIS GAVEL TO MAKE IT OFFICIAL.

YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, ARE YOU?

I MEAN, AS FAR-FETCHED AS THEIR STORY IS, ISN'T THERE A CHANCE THAT MAYBE-- MAYBE--THEY'RE TELLING THE TRUTH?

ALL THESE MURDERS WE'VE SEEN LATELY, THEY'VE BEEN TOO... UNUSUAL.

Sheriff

BLAKE, WHEN YOU'RE SHERIFF, YOU CAN INTERROGATE WHOEVER YOU LIKE.

BUT I'VE GOT THIS THING CALLED *INSTINCT*, AND IT'S SCREAMING THOSE TWO FREAKS ARE GUILTY AS SIN. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.

I'M SORRY, SHERIFF.

MY INSTINCT TELLS ME SOMETHING ELSE IS GOING ON HERE, AND IT'S OUR JOB TO--

IT'S OUR *JOB* TO KEEP THIS TOWN SAFE, AND WE'VE DONE THAT TONIGHT.

IF I WERE YOU, I'D KEEP MY INSTINCTS TO MYSELF AND LEAVE THIS MATTER BE.

UNDERSTOOD?

YEAH.

UNDERSTOOD.

I BROUGHT YOU TWO SOMETHING TO EAT.

I'M PRETTY SURE THE MEAT IS BOLOGNA.

PRETTY SURE.

I'M GUESSING WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET A PHONE CALL.

YOU GOT SOMEONE *TO* CALL?

THAT'S IT? YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY?

WHAT'S THERE TO SAY?

WE'VE ALREADY BEEN TRIED AND CONVICTED.

WE'RE JUST WAITING FOR CIGARETTES AND BLINDFOLDS.

I JUST WANT TO SLEEP.

LOOK, I DON'T HAVE TIME TO BEAT AROUND THE BUSH, SO LET ME GET TO THE POINT:

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING TO THAT BODY AND WHY.

LIKE YOU'D BELIEVE US.

GO GET A SCARY CAMPFIRE STORY SOMEWHERE ELSE.

HUMOR ME.

WE'VE BEEN KILLING HIM, AND WE'VE HAD TO DO IT ENOUGH TIMES TO KNOW THAT WHEREVER HE IS...

"...HE WON'T BE STAYING DEAD FOR LONG."

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, I KNOW.

THE BODY IS UNDENIABLY DEAD. NO PULSE, NO HEARTBEAT.

YET I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER: WHAT IF...?

THE BODY SEEMS TO LOOK BETTER, LESS DAMAGED, THAN WHEN I FIRST SAW IT.

IF THIS WERE TRUE, THE IMPLICATIONS WOULD BE ASTOUNDING.

CELLS AND TISSUE THAT POSSESSED THE ABILITY TO REGENERATE AFTER ALL OTHER BODY FUNCTIONS CEASED!

BUT THIS IS ALL... IT'S CRAZY TALK.

THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY THAT CAN HAPPEN.

"OKAY, DEPUTY. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT ME AND VLAD HAVE BEEN DOING TO THAT *THING?*

"FIRST WE WENT WITH AN OLD-FASHIONED SLICE AND DICE. DIDN'T HOLD, DESPITE HIM LOSING SOME IMPORTANT ORGANS.

"THEN WE GOT A LITTLE MORE AGGRESSIVE.

"NAME A METHOD, WE PROBABLY TRIED IT.

"THINGS GOT A LITTLE OUT OF HAND, I ADMIT...

BUT WE JUST COULD NOT KEEP THAT FUCKER DOWN.

WITCHCRAFT.

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT THIS LOCAL LEGEND SAYS.

HRRRM. LEGENDS ARE NOT A RELIABLE SOURCE FOR TRUTH.

I CAN ONLY TELL YOU WHAT I'VE HEARD.

FOR YEARS, PEOPLE HAVE WHISPERED THAT ONE OF THE TOWN'S MOST POWERFUL FAMILIES GAINED THEIR STATUS THROUGH MAGIC. THE DARK ARTS.

THEY SLPPOSEDLY CAST A SPELL ON THEIR CHILD TO GIVE HIM THE GIFT OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

BUT THE YOUNG MAN VANISHED SOME YEARS BACK AND HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE.

RIGHT. NOT TOUGH TO FIGURE THIS ONE OUT.

THEY FAILED TO READ THE FINE PRINT ON THE SPELL AND THE GIFT TURNED OUT TO BE A CURSE.

CARNAGE ENSUED.

LOTS OF UNEXPLAINED DEATHS, RIGHT?

SO YOU KNOW WE'RE NOT THE BAD GUYS AND YOU REALIZE THAT THERE'S STRANGE SHIT GOING ON.

ARE YOU GOING TO REMOVE YOUR THUMB FROM YOUR ASS AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

I DON'T ***KNOW*** ANYTHING. AT LEAST I DIDN'T BEFORE NOW.

SHERIFF RITTER CONSIDERS IT HIS DUTY TO SERVE THE TOWN'S ELITE, SO HE'S KEPT THIS ALL UNDER PRETTY TIGHT WRAPS.

BUT IT'S TIME FOR HIM TO DEAL WITH THIS MONSTER RATHER THAN WORKING SO HARD TO KEEP THE TOWN IN THE DARK.

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SHERIFF, BUT DO YOU NEED ME TO RUN TO THE M.E.'S OFFICE AND GET HIS REPORT?

WHAT FOR? VICTIM IS DEAD, BEATEN TO DEATH BY A COUPLE OF PSYCHOPATHS.

THE END.

IT'S NOT LIKE THE M.E. IS GOING TO BUST IN HERE AND TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW.

Sheriff

THOOM

JESUS, HARRY.

WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?!

NO...NO, THIS CAN'T BE REAL!

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BE ALIVE... SOMEBODY, HELP!

HELLLLPPP!!

THUD

OH, GOD. NOW WHAT?

UH, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHAT IS OBVIOUS IS THAT THIS MAN SHOULD LET US OUT SO WE CAN FIGHT THE LOCAL LEGEND.

YOU SOUND LIKE THE DIPSHITS I QUESTION AROUND HERE WHO TALK ABOUT HEARING GUNSHOTS AND THEN RUNNING TOWARD THEM.

STAYING IN THIS CELL IS PROBABLY THE SMARTEST, SAFEST THING YOU CAN DO.

SAFE AND SMART ISN'T EXACTLY OUR THING.

OPEN THE CELL AND LET US DO WHAT WE DO BEST.

YEAH? AND WHAT'S THAT?

WHAT YOU AND YOUR BOSS CAN'T DO. WHAT YOU *WON'T* DO.

SO I GUESS THAT IDIOT HARRY LEFT YOU OUT OF THE COLD TOO LONG, BUT FUN TIME'S OVER NOW, BOY.

YOU KNOW THE ROUTINE: IT'S TIME TO GET YOU BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG.

WE CAN DO THIS THE EASY WAY, OR WE CAN--

THUNK

HYUK!

SHLUK

Medica
Exami

WHAT HERE IS SO SPECIAL TO KILL THIS SLASHER FOR GOOD?

THAT'S THE THING, VLAD...

...WE'RE NOT GOING TO *KILL* THIS SLASHER.

AH HA!

WE'RE GOING TO *CAPTURE* HIM.

I HATE TO ASK, CASSANDRA, BUT WHAT IF THIS DOESN'T WORK?

THEN I GUESS WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT OUR LIMITS REALLY ARE.

POLICE

POLICE

POLICE

WHY AM I NOT SPEEDING FAR, FAR AWAY FROM HERE?

PROBABLY BECAUSE IT WOULD BE THE SANE THING TO DO.

RRAAAAHH!

SHLUNK

NEVER AGAIN.

DID YOU HEAR ME, GRUESOME?

NEVER AGAIN!

HOLY SHIT. TALK ABOUT PERFECT TIMING!

HOW DID YOU GUYS KNOW HE WOULD--

WAIT, DID YOU USE ME AS BAIT?

LOOK, THE IMPORTANT THING IS HE'S DOWN FOR THE COUNT.

NOW IT'S TIME TO FINISH HIM OFF.

RRRMMMM...

IT'S GOING TO BE A NICE DAY.

THE PEOPLE YOU MURDERED OVER THE YEARS, THEY'RE MISSING THIS-- FOREVER.

AND THEIR FAMILIES: A DAY LIKE THIS WON'T BE SOMETHING THEY'LL ENJOY FOR A LONG TIME.

MAYBE NEVER AGAIN.

I GUESS THESE SHITTY, TERRIBLE THINGS... YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU.

A BUNCH OF RICH ASSHOLES DO SOME BLACK MAGIC ON A BABY, AND LOOK WHAT THEY GET.

DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU ASK FOR IT OR NOT.

IT'S WHAT HAPPENS.

OKAY. THIS IS WHERE YOU GET OFF.

MPPPHH!

MMPPHHH!

YEAH, PLEADING ISN'T GOING TO GO FAR WITH ME.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY: SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST DESTINED FOR SHIT THEY DON'T WANT.

THIS RIGHT HERE: THIS IS YOUR FATE.

DEAL WITH IT.

THIS IS STILL NOT A GOOD IDEA.

I TOLD YOU: YOU'RE TOO BIG TO GO IN A BOAT THAT SIZE.

BESIDES, THAT WAS SOMETHING I HAD TO DO ON MY OWN.

WE'RE PARTNERS. WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENED WHERE I COULD NOT REACH YOU?

THEN THAT WOULD BE THAT.

YOU GET ALL MY STUFF.

HUURM. THAT IS NOT FUNNY.

AND YOU HAVE NO GOOD STUFF.

LOOK, VLAD, THIS THING WE DO... THERE'S A REASON IT DOESN'T COME WITH A BENEFITS PACKAGE.

YOU ARE SPEAKING LIKE YOU CANNOT AVOID THE BAD ENDINGS.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT.

NEITHER DO YOU.

MAYBE, BUT AT LEAST NOTHING'S INEVITABLE UNTIL IT HAPPENS, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW THAT THE EVERLASTING MAN WILL DETERIORATE BENEATH THE WATER...

...ENOUGH THAT HE WILL GET OUT OF THOSE CHAINS.

YEAH, I KNOW.

THIS WILL KEEP HIM DOWN FOR A WHILE, BUT HE'LL COME BACK.

"MAYBE ME AND YOU WILL STILL BE DOING THIS WHEN HE DOES."

FIN!

FINAL

HACK/SLASH #25A by TIM SEELEY & DOMINIC MARCO

HEAR ME, MY CHILDREN!

LOOK TO THE SKY!

HEAR ME!

I AM *AKAKIOS. THE MURDER MESSIAH.*

YOUR FATHER.

YOUR *GOD.*

THIS WORLD IS AT ITS END. WE HAVE ASKED THE *BACCHANALIANS* TO COME TO US. TO ADMIT THEIR SINS.

AND THEY HAVE DENIED US!

GO! LET THE *CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS* KNOW SALVATION COMES ONLY AT AKAKIOS'S HAND!

MAY THE LIGHT OF THE *BLACK FLAME* ILLUMINATE YOUR WAY!

THOSE WHO DENY OUR GIFT WILL BE HARVESTED LIKE THE ANIMALS THEY ARE!

GHUH!!

GIMME A BURP, GIMME A BURP, GIVE ME A BIG FAT BURP. BUT KEEP THE POOP INSIIIIIIDE.

YOUR PARTICULAR STYLE OF LULLABY IS GOING TO WARP OUR DAUGHTER'S BRAIN.

WOAH! WATCH IT THERE, AVA.

VERY SQUISHY PACKAGE HERE.

I...I'M SORRY...

HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?

WHAT'S WRONG?

NOTHING. I--

SERIOUSLY, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU JUST SAW A GHOST.

YOU GONNA BE OKAY?

Y--YES. I'M SORRY.

I JUST NEED TO BE ALONE.

UH... OKAY.

BRP.

SNF...

GOT A BURP, GOT A BURP, AND AN EXTRA-SPECIAL SURPRIIIIISE.

CAMPGROUND ROCKBONE.

DONIPHAN, NEBRASKA.

MMM. YEAH.

GODDAMN, YOU'RE HOT. I JUST WISH I COULD SEE YOU BETTER.

LESS TALK, MORE TOUCH.

HRRR.

HMM. YEAH.

WAIT. DID YOU HEAR THAT?

LIKE HEAVY BREATHING?

RRRAH! CASSANDRA, I AM HERE!!

SHIT.

AHHHHHH!!

I WILL CHASE HIM TOWARD ROAD. YOU FOLLOW AROUND THE EDGE OF THE FOREST.

NEXT TIME YOU WILL TELL ME WE ARE HUNTING SLASHERS, YES?

FOR NOW, WE MUST RUN! HE IS ESCAPING!

TO HELP ME DECIDE HOW OFTEN TO STAB HIM, TELL ME HOW MANY CHEERLEADERS HE HAS KILLED AT THIS CAMPSITE.

NONE, VLAD.

THEN HE WORKS FOR SOMEONE? HE IS **FISH MONSTER** IN **MAN-SKIN** WHO WILL LEAD US TO **MARY SHELLEY LOVECRAFT**, YES?

NOPE.

THIS WAS NOT A TRAP FOR A MURDERER?

LIKE FOR **DAN THE CATCHER'S MASK KILLER?**

NO.

IT WAS-- HURRM...

YEAH.

OH.

HUURM. I AM SORRY TO KEEP ASKING, BUT I AM NOT VERY MUCH UNDERSTANDING.

WE CAME TO NEBRASKA NOT TO HUNT A SLASHER AT ALL?

WE CAME FOR A... BOY?

NO, WE CAME TO MEET UP WITH *CAT CURIO* TO DISCUSS "IMPORTANT FINDINGS."

HIM I MET ON THE INTERNET. HIS PICS WERE KIND OF HOT AND HE HAD DECENT ENOUGH TASTE IN MUSIC.

WE WERE COMING HERE ANYWAY, SO...

HRRM. BUT YES, I SEE THAT.

THE PART I AM CONFUSED BY...

YOU SEE, YOU WERE MAKING IT WITH A BOY YOU DO NOT KNOW, TREATING IT LIKE IT A NOT-BIG THING.

AND, FOR YOU, ALL TOUCHING WITH OTHER HUMANS IS TERRIFYING AND BAD, AND--

ARE YOU A FISH MONSTER IN GIRL-SKIN WORKING FOR *MARY SHELLEY LOVECRAFT?!*

LOOK, VLAD. THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU, BECAUSE IT'LL COME UP EVENTUALLY.

I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU SOONER, BUT THERE WAS THE THING WITH YOUR FAMILY AND THEN...IT JUST NEVER SEEMED LIKE THE RIGHT TIME.

I TOLD YOU ABOUT HOW WE TRIED TO CURE SAM. HOW IT WORKED FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE.

ABOUT HOW HE...WENT BAD.

YES. BECAUSE OF THE EVIL BRAINO-DINOSAURS YOU HATE SO MUCH.

YEAH. WELL, THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.

I--I SLEPT WITH SAM. WE... WE HAD SEX.

HURR.
HURRRRR.
RRRRAAAAAAGH!
KRRRSH

GIVE ME THAT.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SAVE THESE FOR THE BAD GUYS.

HRRM.

IT'S NOT LIKE *YOU* DIDN'T HAVE SEX WITH SOMEONE ELSE.

GERTRUDE, REMEMBER?

YES. I REMEMBER.

AND I REMEMBER THAT I DID IT *FOR YOU.*

WHEN I WAS ILL, I ASKED ***SAMHAIN*** TO LOOK OUT FOR YOU. HE PROMISED HE WOULD.

I CAME TO TRUST HIM BECAUSE YOU DID.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WERE NOT THE GOOD JUDGE YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE.

THAT YOU WERE BLINDED BY... ATTRACTIONS.

THAT YOU WOULD CHOOSE ***HANDSOME*** OVER ***UGLY***.

THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT TO YOU?

IT'S JUSTIFICATION OF WHY WE DON'T FUCK, RIGHT?

BECAUSE I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN WHAT'S ON THE OUTSIDE?!

THAT'S FUCKING BULLSHIT.

YOU WANNA KNOW WHY I SLEPT WITH SAMHAIN?

BECAUSE I KNEW WHAT THE FUCK THAT ***WAS***-- THE RELATIONSHIP, THE ATTRACTION, ALL OF IT.

I UNDERSTOOD IT FROM DAY ONE.

HE WAS THE GUY I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO LIKE.

EVERY TEENAGE GIRL'S DREAM: THE BAD BOY HER PARENTS WOULD HATE.

A PERFECT REBELLION.

EVEN BETTER THAN THAT, HE WAS SOMEONE I COULDN'T GET KILLED.

AFTER HAVING GEORGIA ATTACKED, AFTER HAVING EVERY ONE OF OUR FRIENDS ENDANGERED,HE WAS THE ONE PERSON THAT NO ONE COULD USE AGAINST US.

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND?

US!

THIS!!

ARE WE ***PARTNERS?***

ARE WE ***FRIENDS?***

DO WE GET TO GET UPSET WHEN ONE OF US FUCKS SOMEONE ELSE?

ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME AROUND, DOING HORRIBLE THINGS, JUST IN THE HOPE THAT I'LL GIVE IT ALL UP SO WE CAN SETTLE DOWN AND HAVE FUCKING BABIES?!

WHAT THE FUCK ARE WE, VLAD?

I DO NOT KNOW.

Mistress Cassie!

Master Vlad!!

It is me! It is Pooch!!

I HEARD THE SHOUTING FROM TWO SITES OVER.

IS THIS A BAD TIME?

Does no one remember lowly Pooch?

NO. IT'S FINE. WHAT'S UP, CAT?

Lowbeast of Nef? Groveling, pathetic thing who loves you both more even than his squeaky carrot toy?

I HAVE THAT INFORMATION I WANTED TO GO OVER WITH YOU, THE THINGS I THOUGHT WE SHOULDN'T COVER ON THE PHONE.

FINE. LET'S HEAD UP TO YOUR CAR.

Oh, lowly, most hated Pooch! He is forgotten like the chicken bone in Master Chris's yard. Oh, where is it?! It vexes his tiny mind.

POOCH. HERE.

GOOD BOY.

ARE YOU OKAY? YOU SEEM *SQUIRRELY*. LIKE, EVEN FOR YOU.

OH. *HA*. NO, I'M FINE.

WOODS, Y'KNOW? BUGS AND ALL THAT.

CAT & DOG

SO, WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT?

HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT SOUTH AMERICA?

CURE FOR SLASHERS. GIANT SNAKE-GORILLA. KIND OF HARD TO FORGET.

I MEAN AT THE VERY END.

AFTER SAMHAIN STABBED YOU AND YOU WERE WITH *DOCTOR CARPENTER*.

OH, YEAH. I WAS IN THE LAB AND HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO FIX ME UP QUICK.

AND THEN...

I... *UH*...

THE LAB'S ROOF CAVED IN WHEN *GORILLACONDA* WAS KILLED BY *THE BEAST*.

YOU AND DOROTHY GOT OUT. DOCTOR CARPENTER DIDN'T.

YOU CAUGHT ME WHEN THE BRIDGE COLLAPSED, THEN SHOT SAMHAIN SO HE WOULD FALL.

AND THAT STAB WOUND YOU HAD...

...IT WAS GONE. WHAT HAD BEEN A DEEP, NASTY CUT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A TINY SCAR.

BEFORE WE LEFT, I WENT BACK INTO THE LAB.

I FOUND A SYRINGE IN CARPENTER'S HAND, AND I GRABBED A SAMPLE.

IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO GET ACCESS TO THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT, BUT I ANALYZED THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF THE CONTENTS.

THEN I COMPARED THEM TO SAMPLES FROM MY B.M.J. UTILITY KNIFE, PINK, WHICH I HAD STUCK INTO SAMHAIN'S EYE.

IDENTICAL.

TO SAVE YOU FROM BLEEDING TO DEATH, DOCTOR CARPENTER INJECTED YOU WITH SAMHAIN'S *"BLACK BLOOD."*

AKAKIOS'S *PANACEA.*

SLASHER JUICE.

NO. THAT'S...

SAMHAIN TOLD ME THAT I HAD THE TAINT RUNNING THROUGH MY VEINS BECAUSE OF MY MOM.

EVERY SICK CREEP WHO FINDS OUT WHAT SHE WAS TRIES TO TELL ME THAT.

AND THEY WERE RIGHT. IT'S THERE. A PART OF YOUR ***BLOODLINE.*** BUT THAT'S DORMANT. WHAT I SAW WAS ACTIVE. ***VIRULENT,*** EVEN.

MAYBE YOU'VE NOTICED THAT YOUR ***RAGE*** IS MORE INTENSE LATELY. THE URGES ARE DARKER. IT'S OVERTAKING YOUR SYSTEM.

BULLSHIT.

I'VE BEEN CUT SINCE THE JUNGLE. STABBED. HURT.

I DIDN'T HEAL.

I APPRECIATE YOU DROPPING SOME SCIENCE ON ME, CAT, BUT YOU'RE FUCKING WRONG.

I'M NOT.

SLSH

AAGHG!

WHAT THE FUCK?!

HUNF! YOU'VE GOT A STRONG WILL!

YOU'RE THE TOUGHEST, MOST SUTBBORN PERSON I'VE EVER MET!

YOU'VE BEEN SELF-SUBLIMATING.

I'M GONNA SUBLIMATE YOUR GODDAMN ABILITY TO BREATHE, YOU LITTLE BITCH!!

LET YOURSELF HEAL!

GIVE IN!

THE APARTMENT OF MARGARET CRUMP, FORMERLY KNOWN AS GEORGIA PEACHES.

TAMPA, FLORIDA.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

HEY, MARGARET.

CASSIE. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

YEAH. THANKS FOR PICKING UP. I KNOW THINGS GOT PRETTY MESSY THERE, Y'KNOW, AT THE END.

AT THE END? CASSIE, WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A BEGINNING.

THE PSYCHOTIC KILLERS DID GET IN THE WAY, DIDN'T THEY?

EVERYTHING IS GOOD? LIKE, NORMAL? BORING?

ONLY YOU WOULD THINK **NOT** HUNTING DOWN KOOKS IN MASKS WAS BORING.

THINGS ARE GOOD.

THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO HEAR. ALSO WHAT I ***DIDN'T*** WANT TO HEAR.

SO, WHAT'S UP? DID SIX SIXX COME BACK?

OR, WORSE, THAT DALE CREEP?

DO YOU NEED ME FOR BAIT?

...

NO. NOTHING LIKE THAT.

GEORG-- MARGARET.

I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU. I...

I COULD HAVE LOVED YOU. FOR A LONG TIME.

FOREVER.

...

I KNOW.

IT WAS NICE TO HEAR FROM YOU, CASSIE. BUT I CAN'T--

THIS ISN'T A GOOD TIME.

I'LL CALL YOU LATER, OKAY?

YEAH. NO RUSH GETTING BACK TO ME.

I'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

KIND OF LATE FOR A CALL. EVERYTHING OKAY, BABY?

OH, YEAH.

JUST AN *OLD FRIEND* WITH *BAD TIMING.*

MMMM. GET YOUR LITTLE BUTT INTO THIS BED. RIGHT NOW.

I JUST GOT OUT OF THE SHOWER.

I THINK YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME, ***JESS.*** NOT A SUGGESTION!

AH! I'M ALL WET!

THAT'S JUST HOW I LIKE YOU.

CATHERINE. WHERE IS CASSANDRA?

OH, UH, I DUNNO. SHE TOOK OFF.

WHY?

I TOLD HER ABOUT HOW I FIGURED OUT SHE'D GOTTEN A TRANSFUSION WITH SAMHAIN BLOOD.

AND THEN I MENTIONED THAT IT'S LIKELY TO OVERTAKE HER SYSTEM, TURNING HER INTO A MINDLESS, HATEFUL KILLER.

ON THE UPSIDE, THERE'S A NICE PERCENTAGE OF INJURIES THAT SHOULD NO LONGER PRESENT MUCH OF A PROBLEM FOR HER. THINK OF THE SAVINGS ON BANDAGES AND FIRST AID CREAM.

YOU TOLD HER THIS?!

YES. IT'S QUITE IMPORTANT, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? AND I DID THE RESEARCH. IT'S A FACT.

Meek but insightful Pooch knows what is coming. Yes, he does.

YOUR FACT MAY HAVE KILLED CASSANDRA!!

CASSANDRA!

THIS IS HOW IT HAS TO BE, VLAD. I AM WHAT I KILL. I'M SURE YOU SEE HOW THAT HAS TO GO.

NO... HNF. NO, YOU AREN'T.

YOU SAW HOW HARD SAMHAIN HAD TO FIGHT WHAT HE WAS.

BUT YOU DIDN'T SEE HOW FUCKING HAPPY HE WAS--*AKAKIOS* WAS--TO LET THAT FAÇADE GO.

PURE, EVIL, HATEFUL JOY.

I'M NOT GOING TO BE A *LIE*, VLAD.

YOU HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO FIGHT BECOMING WHAT YOU HATE.

THIS CHANGES NOTHING.

IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

IT PUTS WHAT I KNOW I AM *INSIDE* ON THE *OUTSIDE*.

A FREAK.

A MONSTER.

THAT'S NOT YOU. YOU KNOW THIS.

YOU FEAR THAT YOU WILL BECOME A MURDERER. A SLASHER.

BUT YOU CARE ***SO MUCH*** FOR PEOPLE, FOR ***YOUR FRIENDS***, THAT YOU HAVE PUSHED THEM ALL AWAY TO ENSURE THEY DID NOT GET HURT BECAUSE OF YOU.

YOU SUFFER ALONE TO ENSURE THEY LIVE, UNHARMED.

IT IS LIKE WE SHOWED THE SPY KING: YOU ARE A ***PROTECTOR***.

A PROTECTOR?!

THERE WAS THIS WOMAN ONCE. HER WEAK AND INNOCENT DAUGHTER WAS TORMENTED BY CRUEL KIDS. SO THE WOMAN CUT THEM INTO LITTLE CHUNKS.

SHE SAID SHE DID IT TO PROTECT THE ONE THING SHE LOVED FROM THOSE OUTSIDERS. SHE SAID SHE KILLED THEM, VLAD...

FOR ME!

IF MY MOM HAD REALLY LOVED ME, REALLY CARED, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE KILLED THOSE KIDS.

SHE WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED MY LIFE INTO A CIRCUS SIDESHOW FUCKING NIGHTMARE.

SHE SLAUGHTERED THOSE OUTSIDERS BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK AND EVIL, AND I WAS JUST AN EXCUSE.

NOW THERE'S ME, "PROTECTING" THE WEAK. BUT IT'S ALL JUST A COVER. AN EXCUSE, SO I CAN KILL WHAT I HATE.

I PUSH PEOPLE AWAY NOT TO SAVE THEM. I PUSH THEM AWAY BECAUSE I HATE THEM.

BUT WHAT HAPPENS NOW THAT I'M NOT EVEN ONE OF THEM?! WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERYONE IS AN OUTSIDER TO ME?!

WHAT'S MY EXCUSE NOW, VLAD?!

FINE. YOU WILL HAVE IT YOUR WAY.

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!

YOU INTEND TO BLOW YOURSELF UP, IN HOPE YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN AS A SLASHER. IT PROBABLY WILL NOT WORK, BUT YOU SHOULD TRY.

AND SINCE YOU CARE NOT FOR ANYONE ELSE, YOU WILL NOT MIND IF I JOIN YOU.

WHAT WOULD IT MATTER TO YOU? AS LONG AS YOU KILL THE OBJECT OF YOUR HATE--IN THIS CASE, YOURSELF...

...WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF AN OUTSIDER DIES, YES?

YOU CARE NOTHING FOR ANYONE.

YOU HAVE NO FRIENDS.

YOU NEVER HAVE TO LOOK AT SOMEONE AND ASK...

..."WHAT THE FUCK ARE WE?"

LET GO.

LET ME GO!!

TSSSSSS

LATER.

HOW'D YOU KNOW WHERE I WAS GOING?

DID YOU HAVE POOCH SNIFF ME OUT?

NO. I SAW THIS SIGN WHEN WE CAME IN.

HURR. I KNEW YOU WOULD CHOOSE DYNAMITE.

AND I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT DINOSAURS AFTER YOUR TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA, YES?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO TAKE OUT ONE LAST DINO AS LONG AS YOU WERE AT IT. HRRM.

NOW I KNOW.

WHAT?

WHAT *THIS* IS.

TO BE CONTINUED...

HEATH, TEXAS.

THE HOME OF RODERICK FETCH.

FOUNDER AND C.E.O., FETCH MEDIA.

SIX DAYS AGO.

...THE KIND OF SOCIALIST AGENDA NOT SEEN SINCE THE SOVIET ERA.

THIS REPORTER, FOR ONE, GRIEVES FOR THE LOSS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

HEH HEH.

LIVE

FETCH NEWS

MEXICO

MURDERS IN MEXICO

IN OTHER NEWS, AUTHORITIES IN MEXICO ARE REPORTING THAT THE STRING OF HEADLESS BODIES DISCOVERED ACROSS THAT COUNTRY OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS IS NOT THE WORK OF FEUDING DRUGLORDS, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED...

INVESTIGATORS ARE NOW ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A LONE KILLER, BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDERS.

IT IS STILL UNCLEAR IF THIS MURDERER IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO THE MASKED FIGURE DUBBED "SUGAR SKULL MAN" BY FRIGHTENED LOCALS.

MR. FETCH! SECURITY BREACH IN QUADRANT TWO!

YES? ISN'T THAT WHY I HAVE YOU...

...AND TWELVE HUNGRY DOBERMANS?

RUH RUH RUH

ARR ARRR

THERE THEY ARE NOW.

BOW BOW-- YEEP!

HOOWWWWW--*

WHAT THE HELL?

THOOM

I HAVE CARRIED THIS WEAPON ACROSS ENTIRE COUNTRIES.

CERTAINLY I COULD HAVE JUST PICKED UP A NEW ONE. THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF BLADES IN THE WORLD.

BUT I AM NOTHING IF NOT NOSTALGIC.

RODERICK FETCH...

...YOU HAVE HELD THE REINS OF POWER FOR MANY YEARS.

BUT AKAKIOS HAS RETURNED. A NEW ERA BEGINS FOR...

...THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.

LOW PRICE INN.
OSKALOOSA, IOWA.

TODAY.

"I KNOW YOU'RE DOING THIS ON PURPOSE!"

Low Price Inn

LOW WEEKLY RATES
CABLE TV HBO ESPN
FREE WI-FI/FRIDGE

MOTEL

HS18P08

FINE, IF YOU'RE DOING IT TO PUNISH ME, BECAUSE IT'S WORKING EXCEPTIONALLY WELL.

BUT LET ME POINT OUT: IF YOU HADN'T SCARED THE BEJEEBERS OUT OF CASSIE'S "DATE," THE COPS WOULDN'T HAVE COME TO THE CAMPSITE.

WHICH MEANS WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO HIGHTAIL IT. WE ALSO WOULDN'T BE SHARING A HOTEL ROOM TO LAY LOW.

SO, REALLY, YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF.

OH MY GOSH.

GROWING-A-TAIL-HERE.

IT IS ALL YOURS, CATHERINE.

HURR HURR.

AHHHHH!!

OH MY GOD!!

IT SMELLS LIKE BURNING HAIR AND BELLYBUTTON STINK!

JEEZ. YOU *VLAD BOMBED* HER, DIDN'T YOU?!

I APPRECIATE THE LOYALTY, BUT YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T PUNISH CAT FOR THE THING I ALMOST DID TO MYSELF LAST NIGHT WITH THE DYNAMITE.

SHE WAS TRYING TO HELP.

Yesss. Big hands. Big petting.

CATHERINE DOES NOT THINK ABOUT ANYTHING BESIDES **SOLVING** THE MYSTERY, YES?

YEAH, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S HER FAULT.

HOW IS NOT CARING HOW HER SOLUTIONS AFFECT PEOPLE NOT HER FAULT?

SHE'S...I DUNNO, LIKE, KIND OF ASPERGER'S, Y'KNOW?

NO SOCIAL SKILLS TO SPEAK OF. NO CONCERN WITH WHAT OTHERS THINK OF HER. OBSESSED WITH LISTS AND FACTS.

IT'S LIKE YOUR APPEARANCE. OR MY PSYCHO-BITCH BLOODLINE.

SHE WAS JUST BORN THAT WAY.

SHE'S JUST LIKE US. SHE'S... SPECIAL.

HRM.

How is content and well-massaged Pooch special?

HM. WELL, YOU LOOK LIKE A BABY SWALLOWED A DOG.

OH, AND PETTING YOU IS LIKE GIVING A HANDJOB TO A FIVE-FOOT, UNCIRCUMCISED WIENER.

Yes! Special!

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY.

GOOD!

WHAP

HARDER!

PRAK

FASTER!

COME ON, *DAISY*. FASTER!

I'M TRYING. JUST--GETTING--*NNF*... A LITTLE TIRED.

ALAN KNIGHT

ANJELICA CASTELLINI

DAISY BLACK

IF YOU WANT TO TAKE UP THE MANTEL OF *NIGHTMARE*, YOU'VE GOT TO LIVE UP TO THE NAME.

BOB WHITE COULD THROW SIX PUNCHES IN A SECOND.

WAP WAP

YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE FISTS THAT MOVE FASTER THAN A TRIGGER FINGER...

...AND FEET THAT MOVE FASTER THAN A BULLET.

WOOF!

HIT THE SHOWERS. REMEMBER, STALL SIX IS THE ONE *ANJELICA* USES FOR--WELL, AVOID THAT ONE.

SO I'M READY TO GO OUT TONIGHT, RIGHT?

NOT EVEN CLOSE.

YOU DID VERY WELL TODAY.

TRUST ME, I KNOW HOW HARD THIS IS.

I'VE BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF MANY SUPERHERO FISTS.

I ♥ TRUCKERS

THANKS, ANJELICA. BUT TELL THAT TO ALAN.

I DON'T THINK HE'LL EVER SAY I'M READY.

AFTER THE CARNAGE CAUSED BY DOCTOR MORTAL AND THE GODBOX*, HE HAS EVERY RIGHT TO BE CAUTIOUS.

THE REMAINING MASKED CRIMINALS ARE MORE DESPERATE AND DANGEROUS THAN EVER.

*SEE HACK/SLASH VOL. 8, "SUPERHERO SIDEKICK SLEEPOVER SLAUGHTER."

OF COURSE THERE'S MORE TO YOUR NEW IDENTITY THAN JUST THE FISTS OF NIGHTMARE.

PART OF YOU WILL BE ***SISTER SACRILEGE***, AND FOR THAT YOU WILL NEED A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRACTICE.

OH MY GOD.

WELL, GO AHEAD. TRY IT ON.

WEAR THIS AS EFFECTIVELY AS I ONCE WORE MY COSTUME AND YOU NEED ONLY BE AS FAST AS THE BLOOD RUSHING TO A MAN'S PANTS.

YOUR FIRST PRACTICE BEGINS IN HALF AN HOUR.

IT'S FETISH NIGHT AT THE POWERHOUSE LOUNGE.

YBOR CITY, FLORIDA.

NOT TO BE UNGRATEFUL, BUT CAN YOU GET OFF ME?

THANKS, THUNDERGUARD. YOUR SWORD HILT WAS POKING ME IN THE RIBS.

UH, RIGHT... SWORD.

HAH!

HA!

HAHA!

HAHAHAH!

HAH!

TOM MORTON AS SKULL MAN!

JESSIE BROCK AS WITCHY WOMAN!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CL

AND, AS LEETA, THE ONE AND ONLY *MARGARET CRUMP!*

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

A.K.A. "GEORGIA PEACHES"

THAT'S MY GIRL! STAR OF THE SHOW!

HEY, MOM!

I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. YOU WENT AFTER YOUR DREAM!

THANKS. I MEAN, IT'S JUST A STOREFRONT THEATRE COMPANY DOING A PARODY OF A SILLY EIGHTIES CARTOON, BUT--

NONSENSE! IT'S AS GOOD AS A HOLLYWOOD MOVIE, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.

MOM, I WANT YOU TO MEET SOMEONE. THIS IS MY GIRLFRIEND, JESSIE.

OH, GOOD TO MEET YOU, JESSIE. YOU WERE WONDERFUL.

GOT TO BE PRETTY COMFORTABLE IN YOUR SKIN TO WEAR *THAT* OUTFIT.

MOM, *UM*, I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU HEARD ME.

THIS IS MY *GIRLFRIEND*...

WELL, ALL THE MORE REASON TO CELEBRATE.

COME ON. DINNER'S ON ME.

ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS.

LINDA MARSH

IT WAS PLAYING CARDS WITH A NON-HUMAN MANIFESTATION WHILE THEY LIT THE PLACE WITH ORBS AND WILL-O'-THE-WISPS!

WE HAVE CONTACT!

A FREESTANDING APPARITION!

DID YOU GET ALL THAT, NEIL?

SNNRT-- WUH? HUH? WAS THERE A GHOST?

NO, BUT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN! THAT WAS JUST A TEST RUN.

WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN REAL?

YOU'D HAVE MISSED OUT ON RECORDING PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE *ANNISQUAM LIGHTHOUSE SPIRIT!*

MARSH INVESTIGATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION WORLD BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

SORRY, LINDA. IT'S SO QUIET OUT HERE, ALL...

BY...

MY--

SNNRRRT.

=SIGH=

GUESS I'LL MAKE US SOME COFFEE.

I DUNNO, GERTRUDE.

IT DOESN'T FIT REAL WELL ANYMORE.

PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA.

NO EXCUSES. IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP THING, WE NEED TO KEEP IT SPICY.

I DRESS UP FOR YOU ALL THE TIME.

GERTRUDE HALL

ALRIGHT, YOU ASKED FOR IT.

IT'S SO WEIRD THAT WE USED TO WEAR STUFF LIKE THIS AND THOUGHT IT LOOKED *MANLY*.

OH MY GOSH! IT'S ***BROCK HELLFREES*** FROM ***FREES OVER!***

SQUEEE!

NOW GET OVER HERE AND KISS ME, YOU SEXY THING.

When will misty-eyed Pooch see you again?

WE'RE GOING TO HEAD OVER TO TENNESSEE TO CHECK OUT SOME HAUNTED CABIN.

I THINK CAT HAS YOUR NEXT CASE LINED UP.

CASE ONE-ZERO-TEN. ***CAT AND DOG, INC.*** WILL BE INVESTIGATING A SELF-HELP GURU AND HIS STRANGE, PUZZLE-OBSESSED FOLLOWERS--

WHOOF!

TRIP!

KRAK

TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE A FRONT FOR A LARGE CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION.

FIRST CONTACT WITH GROUP WAS THROUGH WEBSITE ENTERTHEAPEIRON.COM.

THERE ISN'T EVEN A TAPE IN THIS.

NOW I UNDERSTAND.

ALL THE *PALADINS* ARE IN PLACE.

NO SMALL TASK GETTING THEM POSITIONED AROUND THE COUNTRY IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE EFFORT, BUT WHAT IT MEANS FOR OUR *FAITH*.

THIS IS THE FIRST STEP OF OUR NEW GENESIS.

MASTER AKAKIOS?

YOU WANTED US TO ALERT YOU WHEN THE *CULLING* WAS READY TO BEGIN.

YES. I AM HERE.

DEEP WITHIN MY HEALING POOL, I SWEAR I COULD SENSE MY PALADINS AS THEIR ANTICIPATION FOR THE KILL RISES.

IT SEEMS THAT THE MANY YEARS I SPENT AS AN AMNESIAC DID NOT AFFECT MY MASTERY OF THE ELEMENTS.

MY POTIONS HAVE HEALED MY FLESH AND BONES...

THOUGH IT WOULD SEEM THEY HAVE NOT BEEN AS EFFECTIVE ON MY TEETH, AT LEAST AS OF NOW.

NO MATTER.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT MY PROPHECIES AND PLANS HAVE BEEN REALIZED.

AND, AS CASSIE HACK AND HER FOLLOWERS HAVE ELIMINATED THE WEAK AND UNWORTHY FROM OUR HERD, SO, TOO, MUST I ACT AS THE LION.

GUHK!

SHLUNK

THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY HAS GROWN BLOATED.

ITS LEADERSHIP HAS BECOME SOFT.

WE HAVE BEEN INFILTRATED BY THE BORED AND RICH, THOSE WHO MISTAKE THEIR FINANCIAL SUPERIORITY FOR MORAL SUPERIORITY.

SHUNK

RODERICK FETCH. YOUR LONG SERVICE AND THE SUPPORT OF YOUR MEDIA CONGLOMERATE HAVE BEEN APPRECIATED.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE.

W-WHAT? WAIT...

YOU DIRECTED MY USE AS THE LAMP'S PET ASSASSIN FOR MANY YEARS. YOU MADE ME INTO *"SAMHAIN."*

YOU KEPT ME CHAINED UP LIKE A DOG, UNLEASHED ONLY FOR THE HUNT.

HOW COULD I KNOW?! YOUR MEMORY WAS GONE!

NONE OF US RECOGNIZED YOUR TRUE IDENTITY!

AAAAHHGHK!

SHRRP

YOU SHOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT I AM NO MAN'S SLAVE.

I AM NOT SAMHAIN.

I AM *AKAKIOS.*

I DO NO ONE'S WILL. THIS WORLD DOES *MINE.*

FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

THANKS FOR THE RIDE BACK FROM JERSEY.

MY PLEASURE, MISS.

OH! ALAN, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D STILL BE UP.

I STARTED ON ANJELICA'S PART OF MY TRAINING TONIGHT.

I THINK I'M BETTER AT THIS, BUT I MEAN, HONESTLY, I'LL TAKE PUNCHING OVER FLIRTING ANY TIME.

ALAN?

ALAN?

ALAN?!

NO! LET HER GO, YOU FREAKS!

MARGARET! WHAT'S GOING ON--?

MOM!

UGK...

NEIL!

WITCH.

SINNERRRRR.

BROCK? WHERE'D YOU GO, BABE?

THAT GUY WAS DRESSED PRETTY FUNKY...

WAS HE A SUPERHERO?

I *LOVE* KILLING SUPERHEROES.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

SAMHAIN. HE'S GOING TO KILL... SO MANY...

HE'S AK-AK-AKAKIOS. THE...FOUNDER OF THE BLACK LAMP SOC--:*:

THE BLACK LAMP IS GOING TO RELEASE A TOXIN.

THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE OVER AMERICA.

OH GOD. I REMEMBER.

LISA! I REMEMBER WHAT MAGGIE TOLD ME!

IT WAS A SPELL THAT PASSED ON A MESSAGE...

...ABOUT THE FUTURE.

PUT HER DOWN!!

AH! BY AKAKIOS!

MM. ANOTHER PATIENT FOR ME TO TREAT?

I'D LIKE TO GET UNDER HER BEAUTIFUL SKIN.

NO. SHE IS TO BE LEFT ALIVE.

PITY. WELL, IT FELT GOOD TO STRETCH MY MUSCLES AGAIN ANYWAY.

ENJOY MY WORK, MISS.

AND, PLEASE, TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

CHRIS?

LISA?

OH NO.

NO NO NO NO.

CAT & DOG
INVESTIGATION

WELL, UNTIL OUR NEXT TEAM-UP--

BEEEP

OOOPS. THAT'S A PRIORITY CALL.

CAT AND DOG INVESTIGATIONS. BUT YOU KNOW THAT, AVA.

OH JESUS... CAT, C-CHRIS AND LISA.

HE KILLED THEM.

AND THEY STOLE THE BABY.

WHAT?! ARE YOU OKAY?

DID YOU SAY IT'S AVA, CAT? WHAT'S--?

BEEP BEEP

CRAP. THAT'S BOTH OUR PHONES, TOO.

BZZZT BZZZT

HELLO?

CASSIE. OH, CASSIE, HE-- MY MOM...SHE'S DEAD.

MARGARET. NO...

GERTRUDE?

THEY TOOK HIM, VLAD!

THOSE MASKED FREAKS TOOK BROCK!

TO BE CONTINUED...

MY FAVORITE TIME OF ANY DAY IS THE FEW SECONDS JUST AFTER I WAKE UP.

IN THAT MOMENT, MY BRAIN IS STILL CLOUDED WITH DREAMS.

IN THAT TINY SPAN OF TIME, NOTHING MATTERS. YOU HAVE A VAGUE RECOLLECTION OF WHO YOU ARE, BUT THAT'S ALL. YOU HAVE NO PAST. NO MEMORY OF WHAT HAPPENED THE DAY BEFORE.

AND THEN COMES THE MOMENT THAT'S MY LEAST FAVORITE TIME OF THE DAY.

Oh, ecstatic Pooch is nearly leaping out of his goose-pimpled skin!

We go to visit Mistress Lisa and Master Chris!!

And the infant! Jubilant Pooch cannot wait to see the baby.

Oh, how it reminds him of the lowbeast broods, so wet and pink and shiny, mewling for mother's pendulous breasts!

OH GOD. THIS IS JUST FUCKING AWFUL.

IT IS CRUEL. STOP NOW.

IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY EASIER IF WE HAD TOLD HIM EARLIER.

WE NEED HIS NOSE.

Mistress Lisa! Ever-observant Pooch notices the bright ribbons you have decorated with, in honor of his return!

Pooch does not smell the denizens of the kennel!

Where is Mitzi? And Prince Kitty-Poo?

And Goblin, who bedevils poor Pooch so?

POOCH. CHILL JUST A SECOND, OKAY?

WHAT DO YOU SMELL?

Smell?

:snnf:
:snnf:

Leaves. Kitty litters. Many strangers. Coffee. Fried dough. Dust and grease.

Older than that--two strangers. Three. Two smell of plastics and vinyl. Of dust and sweat.

And the other...

Rotten old blood. Death.

Bad bad bad death.

Where is Master Chris and his feet that stink so good?

Why do I not smell the freshness of Mistress Lisa's hair shampoings?

THEY'RE... I'M SORRY POOCH.

No!

Noooooo nooooo nooo!

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

OVERWRITING THE CASE OF THE QUESTION OF THE ANSWER.

NEW CASE: ONE-ZERO-TEN. THE CASE OF THE DEAD SURVI--

CAT! KNOCK IT THE FUCK OFF. WE'LL BE BACK IN A SECOND, POOCH.

Iieeeen nnnuuhhh...

HI. WE'RE HERE FOR AVA... *UMM...*

NO WORRIES. WE ONLY GOT ONE RESIDENT: THE PRETTY BLONDE FROM UP AT THE ELSTEN PLACE.

YOU DON'T KNOW HER LAST NAME EITHER, *EH?*

SHE'S A WEIRD ONE.

BUT I TELL YA WHAT: THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THIS WHOLE TOWN.

WAY MORE MURDERS PER CAPITA THAN GODDAMN DETROIT.

DANA C.

RIFF DONOVAN

OFFICER HOYT

THEY GO THROUGH LOTS A' COPS 'ROUND HERE, TOO. I ALMOST DIDN'T TAKE THIS JOB ON ACCOUNT OF THE THREE SHERIFFS GETTING DIRT-NAPPED BEFORE THEIR TIME, BUT I WAS KEENER ON PUTTING SOME MILES BETWEEN ME AND MY EX-WIFE.

MAGGIE REIL

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL YOU BE HOLDING AVA AS A SUSPECT?

HOLDING HER? WE AIN'T HOLDING HER.

SHE ASKED TO STAY HERE.

BEEN NO TROUBLE, 'CEPT FOR THAT PICTURE OF SHERIFF REILLY.

MISTER SHERIFF, MAY WE HAVE SOME TIME WITH HER?

TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED.

AIN'T MANY PEOPLE LEFT TO POLICE IN THIS TOWN.

AVA, IT'S CASSIE. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE YOU OUT OF HERE, OKAY?

WHEN I LOOK AT THIS PHOTO OF MAGGIE, I CAN SEE THE VISIONS CLEARER. SHE GAVE THEM TO ME.*

AND IF I STARE AT HER FACE, THE IMAGES GROW SHARPER. STILL, THEY'RE LIKE A PHOTO TAKEN FROM A MOVING CAR.

*SEE HACK/SLASH VOL. 9, "TORTURE PRONE."

I KNEW HE WAS COMING FOR THEM. I SAW IT...

AND I DIDN'T SAVE THEM.

WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?

I DON'T KNOW.

AVA, THAT'S RIDICULOUS.

I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE KILLED THEM MYSELF.

I DON'T DESERVE MY FREEDOM. I DON'T DESERVE TO BE ALIVE. I DESERVE TO STAY IN THIS CELL AND... AND FUCKING ROT.

THEY KILLED THEM IN THEIR BED. THEY TOOK SANDY. THEY KIDNAPPED THE BABY.

SHHHH.

SOMEONE IS TRYING TO HURT US. ALL OF OUR FRIENDS. ALL THE ONES WE LOVE.

THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IT IS TO BE TOGETHER.

HERE, AVA. IT IS YOUR OLD FRIEND POOCH.

HE WILL COMFORT YOU.

OH, POOCH. I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY.

I'M BETTING YOU TWO ARE THINKING EXACTLY WHAT I'M THINKING: SOMEONE SHIPPED SLASHERS DIRECTLY TO ALL YOUR SURVIVING FRIENDS WITH THE INTENT OF GIVING YOU A DISTINCTLY ***NOT-NICE MESSAGE.***

THEY KILL SOME, KIDNAP THE OTHERS.

THEY WANT US TO KNOW THEY MEAN BUSINESS.

THEY WANT US TO COME TO THEM TO GET EVERYONE BACK IN MORE OR LESS ONE PIECE.

WE NEED TO BE PROACTIVE, AND WE NEED A PLAN.

MOST OF ALL, LIKE VLAD TOLD AVA, WE HAVE TO BE TOGETHER.

START CALLING, CAT.

VLAD, DRIVE. I'LL FIND SOMEWHERE FOR US ALL TO MEET IN-BETWEEN.

WE ARE NOT EVEN GOING TO PAY OUR RESPECTS.

I KNOW. SURROUNDED BY DEATH AND WE NEVER MAKE IT TO A FUNERAL.

HEATH, TEXAS.

THE HOME OF RODERICK FETCH.

FOUNDER AND C.E.O., FETCH MEDIA.

RECENTLY DECEASED.

CAN'T HELP BUT THINKING...

...HOW HAPPY MY WIFE'D BE TO KNOW SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT MONSTERS AND DEMONS.

WHAT MANNER OF MONSTROSITY GOT YOU, MISS?

A S-SMILE. TERRIBLE.

TERRIBLE SMILE.

BROCK HELLFREES

ANJELICA CASTELLINI

NEIL MARSH

JESSIE BROCK

YOU GOT ANY IDEA WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

I KNOW SOME FREAKS, BUT PEOPLE IN KINKY COSTUMES AREN'T MY USUAL CROWD.

IT IS CERTAINLY MINE.

I BELIEVE WE ARE THE GUESTS OF *THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY*.

I ENCOUNTERED THEM ONCE, LONG AGO.

LOOK, SOMEONE COMES.

GET HOLD OF HIM! HE'S NOT REASONABLE LIKE *GROSS* OR THE *ANGEL!*

NOT REASONABLE? HE'S A FUCKING PSYCHO!

MANIPULATORS! HEATHENS!!

UNHAND ME!

GLK.

SPLCH

HOLD HIM!

BUT DON'T DAMAGE HIM!

COVETER! YOU WILL NEVER POSSESS ME!

NILES RAFFERTY!

WHAT *INTERLOPER* DARES INTERRUPT MY *SERMON?!*

CALM YOURSELF, MY PALADIN.

YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR *TRUE FATHER.*

YOUR *ONE GOD.*

I KNOW YOU. I HAVE SEEN YOU IN MY MIND.

IT IS YOU WHO STANDS AT THE GATES, RINGED WITH BLACK FLAME, IN MY DREAMS OF HEAVEN.

A HEAVEN WE WILL BRING TO EARTH, *FATHER WRATH.*

YOU WILL LEAD THE CONVERTED ONTO THE FIELDS OF BATTLE AGAINST THE LAWLESS AND MORALLY BANKRUPT.

YOU WILL KILL THE CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS AND FREE THIS WORLD FROM THEIR HEDONISTIC INFLUENCE.

KRAK

YOU WILL FOLLOW THE DARK FLAMES THAT LEAD YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE.

YOU WILL SERVE THE *MURDER MESSIAH.*

BUT FIRST, YOU MUST LEARN TO RESPECT ALL OTHERS WHO SERVE ME.

YOU SERVE *MY* WRATH NOW, NOT YOUR OWN.

THAT FUCKIN' DUDE IS DEFINITELY THE BOSS.

I-- I KNOW HIM. *JESU CRISTO.* SAMHAIN.

COME. WE MUST CONFIRM THE ITINERARY.

THE PURCHASE AND DELIVERY WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH. TWO TRUCKS FROM THE PORT OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE HEAD OF THE STEVEDORES IS A SYMPATHIZER. HE HAS BEEN PROMISED A PLACE IN THE WORLD TO COME.

HEY, LITTLE MAN. WANNA HELP ME RECHARGE?

I'M RUNNING A LITTLE LOW ON *JUICE*.

UHHH...

MISTER CROPSEY, BE GLAD THAT I WANT TO HEAR YOUR REPORT CONCERNING MY PANACEA ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE GRASP OF THE ANGEL.

DESPITE YOUR OBVIOUS MORAL WEAKNESS.

TH-- THANK YOU.

ALL LOCAL AND NATIONAL BRANCHES HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR RESERVES.

WE'LL HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH. WE EXPECT EXPOSURE OF NO LESS THAN TEN THOUSAND, PERHAPS MORE.

I ENVY YOU, CHILD.

THOUGH YOU WERE BORN INTO SIN, YOU WILL REMEMBER NOTHING OF THIS ROTTING DEN OF PERVERSION AND IDIOCY.

YOU WILL GROW UP IN A BETTER PLACE, *SANDRA KRANK*.

DILLON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

C'MON, *DAISY*, YOU BABY! STOP FUCKING CRYING!

ALL YOU GON' GET WITH THAT IS A PAPER.

THAT'S GOOD. THAT'S GOOD. THAT'S ALL I NEED. GET ME THROUGH THE NIGHT.

NIGHT IS THE HARDEST.

AIN'T PAID ENOUGH TO GET ME TO LISTEN TO YOUR SOBBIN', MAN. TAKE THE SHIT AND GO.

HIGHWAY 75.
NEAR THE BORDER OF TENNESSEE AND GEORGIA.
...OKAY, WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
THANKS FOR LETTING US USE YOUR HOUSE, MARGARET.
WE'RE THE LAST ONES. EVERYONE ELSE IS ALREADY THERE.
GOOD. THEN SHE HAS NOT BEEN ALONE.
HEY, DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST MET GEORGIA AND YOU THOUGHT HER NAME WAS *CHICKAMAUGA?*
HEH HEH. YE--
THEY'RE GOING TO RELEASE A TOXIN!
AH! SCREAMING ELF!
Mistress Ava, please be calm.
THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE OVER AMERICA...*HUNH*...KILL MILLIONS.
FOURTEEN YEARS. IN A TINY CELL. FOUND VLAD. BROKEN.
THE NO MAN'S LANDS. BLACK LAMP EMPIRE.
RAN FROM THE STAB HAPPIES ON A FAMILIAR MOTORCYCLE.
FOUND POOCH. RAN FROM AKAKIOS--SAMHAIN. SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM. MAGGIE, YOU HAVE TO KILL HIM.
BANG.

WHAT THE FUCK-- EXCUSE MY LANGUAGE-- WAS THAT?!

SHIT. I DON'T KNOW.

SHE'S A MESS.

WE'RE HERE.

GET HER INSIDE AND INTO A BED.

CASSANDRA, ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH. AVA SAID SHE WAS HAVING VISIONS OF THE FUTURE.

FOURTEEN YEARS FROM NOW.

IT SOUNDS LIKE WE LOSE.

SOON.

HERE, YOU CAN STAY IN MY OLD ROOM.

THANK YOU, GEORGIA.

IT'S SUPER KEEEY-UTE.

Vigilant Pooch will stay at your side, ever ready to protect you from evils. Yes, he will.

Will have to sleep on the bed with you, to do the best job.

NOT NECESSARY. I HAVE MY B.M.J. UTILITY KNIFE, WHICH I'LL TUCK UNDER THE PILLOW.

I BET THERE'S A NICE SPOT ON THE FLOOR JUST FOR YOU, POOCHIE.

BOY, THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A BIG MYSTERY. I'LL HAVE TO MAKE SURE I HAVE ALL OF MY TOOLS, IN WORKING ORDER...

LET'S SEE...

B.M.J. TELEPHONE VOICE CHANGER--FOR MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.

B.M.J. LOCK PICK KIT...*AH*, POOP. IT OPENED...

THERE'S A SLIM JIM OUT OF PLACE.

Whiiiiine...

Lonely Pooch has been abandoned too many times.

He cannot lose Mistress Cat too.

HMM. Y'KNOW WHAT? IT'S KIND OF COLD IN HERE.

I'LL PROBABLY NEED YOU ON THE BED TONIGHT.

MARGARET "GEORGIA PEACHES" KRUMP
LINDA MARSH
GERTRUDE HALL
DAISY "SISTER NIGHTMARE" BLACK
LOOK, I'M NOT REALLY A SPEECH GIVER, OKAY?
I GOT SO NERVOUS DURING A BOOK REPORT WHEN I WAS IN GRADE SCHOOL THAT I THREW UP ON THE PODIUM. PROBABLY RUINED *TUCK EVERLASTING* FOR EVERY KID IN THAT CLASSROOM.
BUT, IT'S REALLY OBVIOUS TO ME, AND LIKELY TO ALL OF YOU, THAT SOMETHING REALLY FUCKING BIG AND REALLY BAD IS GOING DOWN HERE.
I CALLED AS MANY OF THE OTHER "SURVIVORS" WE KNOW.
SO FAR, NONE OF THEM HAVE HAD THEMSELVES OR THEIR LOVED ONES TARGETED LIKE EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM HAS.
A FEW MONTHS AGO, VLAD AND I WENT UP AGAINST TWO SLASHERS WE THOUGHT HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED. IT LOOKS LIKE THEY WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD COME BACK.
NOW SOMEONE HAS RALLIED FIVE NUTBAGS WE THOUGHT WE'D ALREADY PUT DOWN FOR GOOD.FIVE SICK FUCKS WHO WERE PICKED TO SEND A MESSAGE...
MATTHEW "GRINFACE" RAVENSWOOD
ANGELA "ACID ANGEL" CICERO
NILES "FATHER WRATH" RAFFERTY
LYNN JAGODINSKI
DR. EDMUND GROSS
...AS FOR WHAT THIS ALL MEANS, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TO GO ON.
OUR FRIEND AVA HAS BEEN HAVING VISIONS. WEIRD GLIMPSES OF SOMETHING.
SHE THINKS IT MIGHT BE THE FUTURE. A FUTURE THAT DOESN'T LOOK TOO GODDAMN GOOD.

I KNOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOME *X-MEN* TYPE SHIT, BUT JUST BETWEEN THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, WE'VE SEEN ALIENS, GHOSTS, AND A FUCKING KILLER DOLL, SO AT THIS POINT WE CAN'T REALLY THROW OUT ANYTHING.

WE KNOW THAT THEY MURDERED SOME OF OUR FRIENDS, WHILE KIDNAPPING OTHERS. THEY LEFT ALL OF YOU ALIVE FOR A REASON.

BUT NOT FOR LONG, RIGHT? SOMEONE IS GOING TO COME FOR US.

THAT'S WHY CASSIE AND VLAD BROUGHT US TOGETHER. TO PROTECT US.

OH, THEY'LL PROTECT US ALL RIGHT. THEY KEPT US ALIVE ONCE, BUT WHERE WERE THEY WHEN THE KILLERS CAME BACK FOR SECONDS?

WE TRY, BUT WE CANNOT BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE, YES?

EXACTLY. YOU CAN'T. BUT HERE WE ARE COMING TO YOU, WHEN WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AFTER OURSELVES. I JUST LOST THE CLOSEST THING I EVER HAD TO A FATHER. PROBABLY A MOTHER, TOO.

THEY GAVE ME THE ABILITY TO FIGHT FOR MY-FUCKING-SELF!

I CAME HERE WITH THE MISGUIDED HOPE THAT THERE WAS A PLAN, A WAY TO FIGHT BACK. BUT YOU'VE GOT NOTHING.

ALL YOU CAN DO IS REACT WHEN THERE'S ALREADY A PILE OF BODIES.

YOU UNGRATEFUL--

STOP. SHE'S JUST SCARED.

SCARED?

FUCK YOU, YOU BITCH!! I'LL SMASH YOUR SMUG FACE!

NO. YOU WILL NOT.

FUH.

YOU'D ALL BE BETTER OFF BY YOURSELVES.

LATER.

HRRRGM.

BLONDIE STRESSING YOU OUT?

COME ON AND SIT DOWN.

YOU AREN'T EXACTLY LOOSENING UP, BIG GUY.

HURR. SORRY. I AM NOT USED TO BEING TOUCHED.

AND YOU...

OH, RIGHT. I WAS YOUR FIRST.

OL' GERT STILL GIVES YA THE MAN-WOOD, *HUH?*

HURR.

THIS MAN, WHO WAS TAKEN FROM YOU. HE WAS YOUR BOYFRIEND, YES?

YEAH. *HA.* BOYFRIEND.

IT IS NOT A SERIOUS THING, YES?

NO, NOT THAT. IT'S JUST...I'VE USED THAT WORD "BOYFRIEND" ON SO MANY GUYS THAT WEREN'T REALLY ***ANYTHING***, YOU KNOW?

I'VE CALLED GUYS "BOYFRIEND" THAT I ONLY SAW WHEN THEY PLAYED THE COUNTY FAIR AND MANAGED TO GET THROUGH A SHOW SOBER ENOUGH TO STILL FUCK.

BUT, WITH BROCK...

WE ATE TOGETHER, Y'KNOW? HE COOKED ME FOOD.

IT WAS ALWAYS OVERDONE, BURNT, BUT I NEVER SAID ANYTHING.

HE TOLD ME ABOUT BEING ON THE ROAD AND BEING LONELY.

AND HOW GLAD HE WAS TO HAVE SOMEONE TO COME BACK TO--

=HUNNH=

=AHUH=

=HUNH=

=UHHH=

CHAINSAWS, MACHETES, SHOVELS...

...AND ONE MEAN AXE.

JESUS, MARGARET. FIRST GERT, THEN YOU?

I TOLD YOU TO TOSS THAT FUCKING THING INTO THE OCEAN.

I KNOW. I MEANT TO. BUT I KEPT THINKING YOU'D NEED IT SOMETIME.

MAYBE COME BACK FOR IT.

IT'S A GODDAMN ALIEN WEAPON.

YOU COULD HAVE ATTRACTED WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF SHIT TO YOURSELF BY HAVING IT AROUND.

YEAH, SURE. BUT WHY BOTHER CHUCKING IT?

AFTER ALL THE STUFF I'VE BEEN THROUGH, I FIGURED IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME ANYWAY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

ONCE YOU GET INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF STUFF, YOU'RE PRETTY MUCH MARKED FOR DEATH, RIGHT?

I SEALED MY FATE THE MOMENT I WENT TO THAT CONCERT.*

*SEE HACK/SLASH VOL.3, "SHOUT AT THE DEVIL."

YOU GOT ME OUT OF NEF THAT TIME.

SAVED ME FROM THE MIND LEECHES AND THAT DALE WILDMAN CREEP, LATER ON.

THING IS, IF I HAD JUST DIED WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO, MY MOM WOULD STILL BE ALIVE. JESSIE WOULDN'T BE KIDNAPPED.

MARGARET, THAT'S CRAZY TALK.

IS IT? BECAUSE I GOT IT FROM YOU.

YOU WOULDN'T BE WITH ME BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO GET ME HURT OR KILLED.

DIDN'T WANT ME PART OF THIS TWISTED WORLD.

YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SPREAD YOUR MARK.

TELL ME YOU BELIEVED THAT, THE SAME AS I DO NOW.

BECAUSE IF THAT'S NOT IT, THEN YOU TELL ME WHY YOU LEFT ME.

TELL ME IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT ME.

THAT YOU NEVER FELT ANYTHING FOR ME AND NEVER WOULD HAVE.

FINE. WE'RE MARKED. EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US. THE FUTURE HAS ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN.

WE'RE NEVER GOING TO ESCAPE THIS HELL ALIVE.

BUT WE DON'T FUCKING HAVE TO GO EASY.

...RAN FROM THE STAB HAPPIES ON A FAMILIAR MOTORCYCLE. FOUND POOCH. RAN FROM AKAKIOS-- SAMHAIN.

SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM. MAGGIE, YOU HAVE TO KILL HIM.

YOU'RE LEAVING.

IF YOU'RE AS GOOD OF A DETECTIVE AS THEY SAY YOU ARE, YOU'LL REALIZE NO ONE HERE HAS A CLUE.

MY, SHE'S JUST A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, ISN'T SHE?

I WAS GOING TO SAY THAT SHE'S KIND OF A CRANKY BITCH.

SO, I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE A DETECTIVE?

INTREPID DETECTIVE. OVER FIFTY ACCURATE CONCLUSIONS AND SEVERAL ARRESTS.

I'M A BIT OF A DETECTIVE MYSELF.

MORE OF A "PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR," I GUESS YOU COULD SAY.

MIND IF I TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR NOTES?

I GUESS. "VISIONS OF THE FUTURE" AREN'T WHAT I'D CONSIDER GOOD EVIDENCE FOR A PROPER INVESTIGATION, SO I DOUBT YOU'LL FIND ANYTHING OF USE THERE.

TIME TRAVEL IS, AT BEST, SCIENTIFICALLY IMPROBABLE, AND MOST VISIONS ARE THE RESULT OF MENTAL ILLNESS OR, Y'KNOW, SMOKING THE MARY JANE.

HM. A PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR KNOWS TO NEVER DISCOUNT THE IMPROBABLE.

COME ON. I'VE SEEN THOSE AWFUL ***GHOST HUNTER*** SHOWS. THEY FEATURE, LIKE, ***THE OPPOSITE*** OF GOOD DETECTIVE WORK. YOU CAN'T COME INTO AN INVESTIGATION WITH PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS AND MAKE THE EVIDENCE FIT YOUR HYPOTHESIS.

HMM. THAT'S INTERESTING. SHE MENTIONED STAB HAPPIES.

I SAW THAT. FIGURED IT WAS JUST RAMBLING.

WELL, I WORK AT A COLLEGE.

I CAN TELL YOU THAT STAB HAPPIES ARE FANS OF THAT SILLY COSTUMED RAP BAND, THAT MIME SQUAD BAND.

THEY CONSTANTLY DRINK THAT AWFUL SODA--***STAB***, IT'S CALLED.

THAT'S WHERE THEY GET THEIR NAME FROM.

ONE OF MY STUDENTS, WELL, SHE'S A BIT OF A TROUBLEMAKER.

SHE WAS TELLING ME THAT SHE WAS GOING TO ONE OF THEIR GATHERINGS.

PLANNED TO PAINT HER FACE UP AND ACT LIKE A CLOWN.

I THINK IT MIGHT BE THIS WEEKEND EVEN. MISSISSIPPI, MAYBE?

TAC TAC TAC TAC TAC

THAT'S IT! CASE ONE-ZERO-ONE-TWO: ***THE CASE OF THE MAD, MAD MAILMAN.***

THE CASE OF THE WHAT?

OH MY GOSH. I HAVE TO TELL CASSIE!

Yah! Flightless Pooch flies!

WAIT FOR ME!

MAKE SURE YOU GIVE ME PROPER CREDIT!

THIS WAS A COLLABORATION!

=Sigh=

THE MAILMAN! IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MAILMAN!!

CAT. RITALIN AND BREATHE.

THE CASE. MY LAST CASE, BEFORE... WHEN I WAS TWELVE. MISTER WYNORSKI, THE MAILMAN, HE GOT SOME KIND OF BLACK LIQUID ON HIS SKIN.

IT TURNED HIM INTO A MURDERER. LIKE, A SERIOUS MURDERER.

HE CHOPPED UP A WHOLE BUNCH OF SORORITY GIRLS.

I FOLLOWED THE ADDRESS ON THE PACKAGE AND FOUND A WOMAN WORKING FOR THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.

THEN SAMHAIN STABBED ME. I WAS IN A COMA FOR THIRTEEN YEARS.

OKAY. BRING IT HOME.

"AVA. SHE SAID THERE WAS A TOXIN. IN HER VISION. A TOXIN TO KILL MILLIONS.

"AVA ALSO SAID THE STAB HAPPIES WERE CHASING HER. STAB HAPPIES!

"THEY GET THEIR NAME FROM HOW MUCH THEY LOVE ***STAB*** SODA.

"WHATEVER THAT BLACK STUFF WAS MY MAILMAN FOUND, THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY IS GOING TO USE IT TO TURN AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE INTO SLASHERS.

"THEY'RE GOING TO POISON THE SODA AT THE MIME SQUAD GATHERING.

"THOUSANDS OF CRAZED FANS TURNED INTO SAVAGE MURDERERS.

"OH GOD. THEY EVEN COME WITH THEIR OWN MASKS."

HAPPY GATHERING 2012!

TO BE CONTINUED!

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI.

NEMKE BEVERAGE COMPANY.

11:42 A.M.

NEMKE BEVERAGE CO.

POP POP FIZZ FIZZ.

HOW CAN I HELP YOU TODAY?

OH, WHY, HELL-- HOWDY!

MUH NAME IS LOUISA MAY, AND, WELL, I JUST LOVE YOUR **STAB SODA.**

ESPECIALLY THAT LOVELY **RIOTOUS RHUBARB!**

AND, WELL, UNFORTUNATELY MY LOCAL STORE HERE IN HATTIESBURG IS ALL OUT. SO, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD TELL ME IF YOU'D BE SENDING OUT A TRUCK ANYTIME SOON.

'CUZ, I MUST SAY, WATER JUST AIN'T GONNA CUT IT...I, UH, DO DECLARE!

ALL STORES ARE RESTOCKED ON THE WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK FROM THE CLOSEST LOCAL BOTTLER.

DUE TO HIGH DEMAND IN THE HATTIESBURG AREA, SHIPMENTS MAY BE COMING FROM OTHER SOURCES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, OUT-OF-STATE BOTTLERS.

YOU CAN HELP CHOOSE OUR NEXT FLAVOR. WILL IT BE **EGG CREAM EXTREME** OR **DIET NEW CAR SMELL?**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE THE SURVEY?

OH, NO, SUGAH, THAT'S OKAY. THANKS NOW.

UH...Y'ALL COME BACK NOW, Y'HEAR?

OUR OWNER: RODERICK FE

THANKS FOR CALLING NEMKE BEVERAGE COMPANY AND BEING PART OF THE CARBON-NATION.

CHICKAMAUGA, GEORGIA.

3:11 P.M.

IT'S WEIRD, BEING IN MARGARET'S CHILDHOOD HOME. IT'S SO CHEERY. HOMEY. WITH ALL THE TOUCHES AND FLOURISHES YOU'D EXPECT FROM AN AVERAGE, MIDDLE-AGED, ALL-AMERICAN, NOT-BATSHIT-INSANE MOM.

IT'S NOT THE KIND OF PLACE I EXPECTED TO USE TO STAGE A WAR. BUT THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE. AMASSING TROOPS. STRATEGIZING. PREPARING FOR CASUALTIES.

ACTUALLY, FOR MORE CASUALTIES. WE'VE ALREADY LOST FRIENDS: LISA, CHRIS, GEORGIA'S MOM. ALL DEAD. OTHERS HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED. THEY MAY BE DEAD, TOO.

NO ONE ELSE CAN DIE. NOT FOR ME. NOT FOR MY WAR.

SO I NEED TO KNOW...

...HOW MUCH OF THE SWORD I CAN FALL ON.

SLLLCH

TEN PINTS OF BLOOD IN MY BODY.

SIXTY TO ONE HUNDRED BEATS OF MY HEART EVERY MINUTE.

DEATH IS JUST MATH.

AND THE MATH SAYS I SHOULD BE DONE IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES.

BUT I WON'T BE. I HAVE SOME OF SAMHAIN--AKAKIOS--INSIDE ME. HIS PANACEA WILL NOT LET ME DIE.

I HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO CONTROL IT. IF I DON'T, THE PANACEA WILL PULL ME OUT OF THE GRAVE.

IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF THAT SLASHERS CAN STILL BE HURT. SLOWED DOWN. KILLED.

IF ANYONE SHOULD KNOW THAT, IT'S ME.

FRUSTRATION. ANGER. HATE. THEY'RE THE KEYS TO HEALING FAST. GETTING RIGHT BACK ON THE TRAIL OF WHOEVER NEEDS KILLING.

KRAK

HNGH!

UH...FUCK. LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD AT ONCE. HIT MY HEAD TOO HARD.

GOOD TO KNOW SLASHERS CAN STILL...PASS--

FWUMP

THE HELL?

CASSIE!!

CASSIE! ARE YOU OKAY?!

WHAT'S WRONG?

OH. JEEZ, SUCH A KLUTZ.

I SLIPPED.

WHEW. YOU SCARED THE CRAP OUT OF ME.

LIKE, ALMOST LITERALLY.

MARGARET, HOW IS IT THAT YOU AND I ALWAYS END UP IN THE BATHROOM TOGETHER?

CASSIE!

CASSIE! I FOUND IT!

WE FOUND IT!

OKAY, BRIEF ME.

AND, CAT, NOTE THE WORD "BRIEF."

YEAH, YEAH. SO LINDA AND I HAVE BEEN CALLING ALL OVER TO FIND OUT AS MUCH AS WE COULD ABOUT STAB SODA.

WELL, KNOWING THAT STAB IS GOING TO BE THE AGENT TO CARRY THE POISON, WE DECIDED TO FIND OUT WHO OWNS THEM.

IT TURNS OUT THE PARENT COMPANY, NEMKE BEVERAGES, WAS RECENTLY PURCHASED BY SUPER FOOD PRODUCTS. WHICH IS OWNED BY INFOCORP, WHICH IS OWNED BY--

FETCH NEWS CORPORATION!

FOLLOWING MY SUSPICIONS, I WENT THROUGH THEIR ENTIRE EMPLOYEE DIRECTORY, WHICH WAS QUITE AN ENDEAVOR, AND FOUND SOMETHING EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

THE BALTIMORE WIRE NEWSPAPER. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER: ALICE RUTH CILENTO.

AAAAND I SEE THAT MEANS NOTHING TO YOU, SO I'LL EXPLAIN THAT IN ***THE CASE OF THE MAD, MAD MAILMAN,*** I INTERCEPTED A POISONOUS BLACK LIQUID INTENDED FOR ONE ALICE CILENTO.

THIS INTERCEPTION CAUSED ME TO BE...

=AHEM=--

STABBED BY SAMHAIN, ON BEHALF OF THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY...

...A LONG TIME AGO.

ALSO INTERESTING: RODERICK FETCH DIED JUST THIS WEEK IN HIS TEXAS HOME.

A TEAM OF LAWYERS IMMEDIATELY MODIFIED HIS ESTATE AND HIS HEIR WAS NAMED.

BUT HERE'S THE THING: IT'S NOT ANY OF HIS CHILDREN. INSTEAD, IT'S A MYSTERIOUS, UNNAMED MAN.

I DON'T LIKE WHERE THIS IS GOING.

WELL, SINCE I SUSPECT MISTER FETCH'S DEATH WASN'T VERY NATURAL, I STARTED LOOKING UP OTHER UNEXPLAINED MURDERS IN THE AREA.

I ELIMINATED EVERYTHING THAT WAS PRETTY CLEARLY A CARTEL HIT, AND I STARTED TO GET A PRETTY DISTINCT LINE, GOING SOUTH THROUGH MEXICO...

...ALL THE WAY BACK INTO SOUTH AMERICA. NEAR DOYLE VALLEY.

FUCK.

IT'S HIM, ISN'T IT?

IT'S...LOOK, IT'S NOT ALL BAD. WE MANAGED TO CALL ON ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS: OFFICER HAZELWOOD IN MONTANA.

HE SAID HE DOESN'T THINK HE CAN CALL IN THE STATE POLICE WITH SO LITTLE EVIDENCE.

HOWEVER...

...WE THINK WE CAN INTERCEPT THE TWO SODA TRUCKS AND STOP THIS SAMHAIN-MAN FROM TURNING THOSE SILLY KIDS INTO MONSTERS.

--SSKKRSH-- RESPOND TO BEECH BLUFF ROAD ADDRESS.

--SKKRCH-- ASSISTANCE NEEDED.

HIGHWAY 45.
NEAR JACKSON, TENNESSEE.
3:23 P.M.

OLD LADY CHRISTIANSEN DROPPED HER WEDDING RING DOWN THE SINK. AGAIN.

=SIGH=

--TINUING TRIBUTE TO LATE KNIGHT A.M. HOST, ALAN KNIGHT...

KLK

...WHO DIED EARLIER THIS WEEK.

WE'LL BE PLAYING CLIPS FROM SOME OF HIS BEST EPISODES.

THE INVESTIGATION INTO KNIGHT'S MURDER IS ONGOING. AND, WELL, WE JUST WANT TO SAY: IN THESE DARK TIMES...

...WE'LL BE HOPING THAT "THE NIGHT IS DRAGGED OUT INTO THE LIGHT."

CHICKAMAUGA, GEORGIA.

4:08 P.M.

HRM. YES. LIKE THAT.

FEELS WEIRD. LIKE, TOO OPEN, Y'KNOW?

I THINK I'D FEEL BETTER WITH A SHOTGUN. MISSILE LAUNCHER, MAYBE.

YOU EVER THINK OF TRADING UP?

NO. THE BUTCHER TRAINED ME IN THE USE OF THE BLADES NOT JUST AS DEFENSE.

THEY WERE TO HELP ME STAY FLEXIBLE.

FLUID, YES?

WHEN A PERSON USES A GUN, THEY THINK ONLY OF WHAT IS AT THE END OF THE BARREL.

THEY POINT FORWARD, FOCUSED ON THEIR FRONT, WATCHING THE BULLET DESTROY WHATEVER IS BEFORE THEM.

THEY ARE ALWAYS FORGETTING TO WATCH THEIR BACK, YES?

VLAD! REPORT TO THE *WAR ROOM!*

HRM. WAR ROOM LOOKS LIKE KITCHEN.

UNITED STATES

Gulf of Mexico

MEXICO

WHAT BETTER PLACE TO SERVE *WAR D'OEUVRES*, RIGHT?

OKAY, FIRST IT SHOULD BE MENTIONED THAT CAT AND LINDA HAVE DONE SOME, LIKE, UN-FUCKING-BELIEVABLE DETECTIVE WORK ON THIS.

IT WAS ALL QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY, ESPECIALLY WITH MY YEARS OF SPECIAL INTREPID DETECTIVE TRAINING.

BUT, *UM*, ACTUALLY, I'M REALLY GLAD I HAD MISSUS MARSH TO BOUNCE IDEAS OFF OF.

And humble, strategically minded Pooch!

RIGHT, AND POOCH.

ANYWAY, WE DETERMINED THAT THE *BLACK LAMP SOCIETY* WILL BE POISONING A SHIPMENT OF SODA BOUND FOR THE *IG'NANT MIME SQUAD'S HAPPY GATHERING.*

HERE, AT THE *SOUTH MISSISSIPPI FAIRGROUNDS*, NEAR HATTIESBURG.

New Orleans

Houston

WE FIGURED OUT THE SCHEDULE OF GROCERY STORE AND VENDING MACHINE SHIPMENTS FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTY, AND DETERMINED WHICH TRUCKS WOULD BE ON WHAT ROUTE AND WHEN.

AND THEN WE CROSS-REFERENCED THAT WITH INFORMATION WE RECEIVED FROM AN ALLIED POLICE OFFICER CONCERNING WEIGH STATION CHECK-INS.

WE THINK WE'VE IDENTIFIED TWO TRUCKS WITH UPCOMING ROUTES THAT DON'T CORRESPOND TO THE USUAL PATTERN.

NEAT, RIGHT? THE *KING OF SPIES* WOULD JUST POOP!

THE BLACK LAMP, BEING PRETTY SMART, SENT THE TRUCKS ON TWO DIFFERENT ROUTES. ONE IS COMING FROM THE NORTHWEST, WHILE THE OTHER IS COMING FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

IF WE SPLIT INTO TWO UNITS, WE HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF INTERCEPTING THEM BOTH.

LOOK, THIS IS ALL REAL INTERESTING, BUT HOW DOES THIS HELP US GET OUR PEOPLE BACK?

THEY TOOK OUR FRIENDS, KILLED SOME OF THEM, TO THROW US OFF THIS TRACK.

IF WE DON'T STOP THEM HERE, WE'RE GOING TO LOSE A LOT MORE THAN JUST OUR LOVED ONES.

WE STOP THIS SHIT. SHOW THEM WE AREN'T FUCKING AROUND.

AND THEN VLAD AND I WILL TAKE OVER.

BECAUSE AFTER WE RUIN THEIR PLANS, WE'RE GOING TO BRING THESE ASSHOLES OUR USUAL MIX OF PAIN AND TERROR.

WE'LL GET OUR FRIENDS BACK. THEN WE'LL SERVE UP SOME *GOOD OLD-FASHIONED, BLOODY, NASTY GODDAMN REVENGE.*

--APPRECIATE THE CALL, RONNIE. BUT LET ME REITERATE MY POINT: THERE ISN'T ANY GOOD EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE EXISTENCE OF ACTIVE MASKED HEROES IN THE FORTIES.

OR ANY TIME SINCE THEN, FOR THAT MATTER.

I KNOW SOME PEOPLE FIND THAT VERY DISAPPOINTING.

WE WANT TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE THOSE SO COMPELLED TO SERVE THE GREATER GOOD THAT THEY WOULD VENTURE OUT ALONE TO CONFRONT EVIL.

THEREIN LIES THE PROBLEM WITH THE IDEA OF THE SUPERHERO.

THE NOTION OF THE SUPERHERO IS BUILT UPON THE BELIEF THAT ONLY A FEW HAVE A TRUE SENSE OF JUSTICE AND THAT IT'S UP TO THESE UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF RIGHTING OUR SOCIETY.

I WOULD SAY--AND MAYBE THIS IS JUST ME GETTING OLDER--THAT THE IDEA OF THE SUPERHERO IGNORES A VERY IMPORTANT TRUTH.

WE, AS A SOCIETY, SHARE THE BURDEN OF HELPING EACH OTHER.

OUR GREATNESS COMES FROM THE DESIRE FOR JUSTICE WE ALL SHARE.

THE NOTION OF THE LONE MASKED HERO IS FROM A TIME WHEN RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM WAS, PERHAPS, NECESSARY.

BUT AS THE WORLD GROWS SMALLER, THAT NEED, IF IT EVER TRULY EXISTED, IS PASSING.

OUR STRENGTH NOW DOESN'T STEM FROM WHAT WE CAN DO ALONE...

...IT COMES FROM WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER.

HIGHWAY 59.

FIFTEEN MILES OUTSIDE OF PICAYUNE, MISSISSIPPI.

"DONDÉ ESTÁ EL BAÑO? REPEAT."

DONDÉ ESTÁ EL BAÑO?

WHERE IS THE BATHROOM?

YOU PLAN ON TURNING THIS OFF ANYTIME SOON?

JUST TRYING TO BETTER MYSELF--HEY, WHAT THE HELL?

IS THAT...A DEER?

SOME KINDA DOG?

Angry Pooch shows you disrespect by raising his center toe!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO SLOW DOWN FOR ANYTHING.

IT'S A GODDAMN CHUPACABRA!!

WELL, SHAVE MY ASS AND CALL ME HARRY.

THAT *IS* A CHUPACABRA.

SHIT, WE CAN'T STOP. I MEAN, FOR SURE, RIGHT?

TAKE MY PHONE! WE CAN GET SOME PICTURES!

SELL THAT SHIT TO *HOAX HUNTERS!* LET'S SEE 'EM CALL *THIS* "BUNK."

SHIT!!

RUUUNCH

CHRRSH

AAAHHH!

CRAP! IT'S STILL MOVING!

Did Pooch do well?

YOU'RE GREAT NEAR-ROADKILL!

NOW WE GOTTA GET CASSIE!

I TOLD YOU NOT TO SLOW DOWN, GODDAMNIT!!

PKOW

SHIT!

PTINK

SPLK

AHHHH!!

JESUS CHRIST!

PULL THE FUCK OVER, DIPSHIT!

AH! FUCK YOU!!

PALADIN, HELP US!!

GAAAHDAAMN!

SSKKKRCCCH

COME ON! GO, GO, GADGET CAR!!

GAH! THE WHEELS ARE MOVING TOO FAST!

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, MY B.M.J. UTILITY KNIFE, PINK, IS *USELESS!*

PALADIN!!

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAMES THAT--

CONTINUE?

RESPAWN.

I AM GRINFACE.

AAHHH!!

AHHH!!

KRRSH

YOU.

I REMEMBER.

IT'S MUTUAL. HOW COULD I EVER FORGET MY FIRST?

GRAHH!

SPLATTER HOUSE!

SPLAK

WHUF!!

KRAK

UNGH.

HAMMER IN THE FACE... FUCKING...

...HURTS.

INSERT QUAR--

RRK!!

SHUNK

NICE SEEING YOU AGAIN, ASSHOLE.

VRRROOOMMMMM

CASSIE!!

HOLY SHIT! DAISY?!

HUNGHK!

SCREEEEECH

GAME OVER.

KAIJU

=HUNGHK=

=COFF=

WOW, DAISY. YOU =HUNGH= CAME BACK.

YEAH. YOUR LITTLE PARTY WAS ALL OVER THE SCANNER.

LUCKY FOR YOU, HUH?

LIKE A REGULAR...DAMN... LEPRECHAUN.

WE HAVE TO MOVE! COPS ARE ON THE WAY AND I LEFT A DEAD GUY BACK THERE!

Car ride!!

BAKOOM

WHOA!

I GUESS YOU DID HAVE A PLAN.

THIS IS NO TIME TO BLOW EACH OTHER.

THAT'S ONLY STEP ONE OF THIS BRILLIANT FUCKING SCHEME.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

BEEP BEEP BEEP

URRNGH.

OOH, BETTER GET THAT. COULD BE IMPORTANT.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

BEEP BEE--

SHRAK

OH WELL. MAYBE THEY'LL LEAVE A MESSAGE.

I ACTUALLY WANT TO THANK YOU.

IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU AND CASSIE, I'D STILL BE SNIPING OFF KIDS IN TIGHTS FOR CREEPY OLD LOSERS WITH BAD CASES OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT.

INSTEAD, I'M PART OF A GENUINE PLOT ***TO RULE THE GODDAMN WORLD!***

TO BE CONTINUED!

WAAAAAUUUUUUU...
WAAAAUUUUUUUUU...

HNNGH...

POPLARVILLE WEST HIGH.
POPLARVILLE, MISSISSIPPI.

WAAAAAUUUUUUU...

BA... BABY?

VLAD. MONSTROUS PARTNER TO, AND PROTECTOR OF, CASSANDRA HACK.

THERE, THERE, LITTLE SANDY.

BE QUIET FOR AUNTIE BRITT.

LET ME SAY IT FOR YOU, VLAD: "HOW CAN YOU DO THIS WHEN WE WERE ALLIES?"

YOU WERE AN ALLY OF *CONVENIENCE*. WE WERE NEVER FRIENDS.

CERTAINLY NOT EQUALS.

NOT EVEN CASSIE MISTOOK YOU AND ME FOR THAT.

ME, SHE LET ME TAKE HER VIRGINITY.

YOU, SHE CARED SO LITTLE FOR, YOU ENDED UP HERE.

KRAK

HMM. A SKYBOX IS YOUR PICK FOR THIS BONDING TIME.

YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME TO WATCH A HOCKEY GAME, YES?

A DOG SHOW?

NOTHING QUITE THAT BOORISH.

I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE TO WITNESS THE PREPARATION FOR THE BLACK LAMP'S FINEST HOUR.

"ALL THE ELEMENTS ARE BEING PUT IN PLACE:

"*THE MAZE*, COMPOSED OF THE DEAD REMAINS OF THE HARVEST. A SYMBOL OF THE ENTANGLING NATURE OF IMMORALITY.

"*THE LAMBS*, WHOSE PRECARIOUS HOLD ON CONTINUED LIFE IS INCENTIVE FOR THOSE WHO WILL NAVIGATE THE MAZE.

"THE BLACK LAMP *HIGH COUNCIL*, WHICH HAS KEPT MY MESSAGE ALIVE DURING THE TIME BETWEEN MY DISAPPEARANCE AND MY REBIRTH.

"AND THE *YOUNG ROYALTY*, WHO WILL HELP USHER IN MY DOMINION IN THE YEARS TO COME."

YOU SEE, VLAD, IN OUR WAR AGAINST THE *CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS*, IT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN NECESSARY TO APPROPRIATE THEIR LOVE FOR *RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM.*

FROM TIME TO TIME, KILLING THOSE IMMORALLY INFERIOR TO US HAD THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE OF CREATING MARTYRS. HEROES.

SO WE BEGAN OFFERING THE ACCUSED THE CHANCE AT REDEMPTION.

BY KILLING OTHERS, BY ACTING IN THE MANNER OF THE GREAT *PALADINS*, THE IMPURE COULD REDEEM THEIR SOULS.

WHILE A COMMUNITY DANCED AND CAVORTED IN HOPES OF ENSURING THEIR FERTILITY, THEIR HARVEST, ONE OF THEIR OWN WOULD BE REVELING IN HER PERSONAL SURVIVAL.

AND DO SO WEARING THE SKINS OF HER BRETHREN.

BRITTNEY, IF NONE OF THEM SURVIVE, KILL THE BABY FOR THE COUNCIL.

OTHERWISE, THE CHILD IS YOURS TO DO WITH AS YOU SEE FIT.

COOL. MAYBE I'LL KEEP HER.

OH, AND VLAD...

...I ONCE GAVE YOU MY WORD THAT I'D PROTECT CASSANDRA WITH MY UNDYING BODY. I'D LIKE TO MODIFY THAT VOW A BIT.

I PROMISE TO KEEP HER ALIVE LONG ENOUGH SO THAT YOU CAN WATCH ME KILL HER.

HIGHWAY 59. EXIT 15 REST STOP.
OUTSIDE MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI.
THIS'UN HERE.
2345
HELLO? WE UNDERSTAND Y'ALL CALLED FOR ASSISTANCE.
MISS CURIO? WANNA ROLL DOWN THE WINDOW, PLEASE?
HAVE IT YOUR WAY, YA CAVORTIN' WHORES.
LIGHT 'EM UP LIKE THE BLACK FLAME THAT LIGHTS OUR WAY, NOEL.
UH, JIMMY? AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT SOME LOVE DOLLS IN HERE.
WELL AIN'T THAT A KICK IN THE TEETH?

AFTER A KICK IN THE TEETH.

I GUESS THAT ANSWERS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN TRUST THE POLICE.

WE'RE ON OUR OWN.

THEY SHOT MY SHIRT. LIKE, FOUR TIMES. EXCESSIVE.

NUUNH. OW.

You are not entirely alone, Mistress Daisy! You are aided by loyal Pooch!

AHH! WHAT--?

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

Master of intimidation is he!

SO, ALL WE KNOW IS THAT THE OTHER CREW DIDN'T GET THROUGH.

DO WE MOUNT A RESCUE?

NOT TO POOP IN ANYONE'S CORNFLAKES, BUT WE REALLY DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE ALIVE.

IT'D BE A WASTE TO TRY AND RESCUE CORPSES WHEN, YOU KNOW, THE WHOLE COUNTRY COULD GET HIT BY A MURDER EPIDEMIC.

=SIGH= HER DELIVERY SUCKS, BUT CAT IS RIGHT.

"OUR FIRST PRIORITY HAS TO BE STOPPING THAT SHIPMENT FROM REACHING THOSE GODDAMN SODA ADDICTS AND MAKING THEM EVEN MORE OF A MENACE THAN THEY ALREADY ARE."

WE WANT STAB!

WE WANT STAB!

WE'RE...WE'RE TEMPORARILY OUT, FANS. B-BUT ANOTHER SHIPMENT IS ON ITS WAY!

SOLD!

STAB!

Soda

RIOTOUS RHUBARB!

BACON CELERY DELIGHT!

POPLARVILLE WEST HIGH.

THE MAZE.

HELLO?

ANYBODY?

WHERE THE HELL ARE WE?

FIRST WE WERE IN A TRUCK AND THEN... HERE.

AHHHHHH!!

GAH!!

MISSUS MARSH?!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THEY SAID WE HAD TO... *KILL* EACH OTHER! OR THEY'D KILL THEM! THEY'D KILL *NEIL!!*

THEY SAID THEY'D KILL MY NEIL. I'M SO SORRY. SO, SO SORRY.

IT'S OKAY, LINDA. YOU JUST DID WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD TO.

BUT WE CAN'T DO WHAT THEY TELL US TO DO. WE HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER-- TO SAVE OUR PEOPLE.

THEN WE KILL THOSE BLACK LAMP DICKS. *TOGETHER.*

IT'S WHAT *CASSIE* WOULD DO.

COME ON NOW. YOU...YOU SHOULD REALLY STOP CRYING.

PLEASE?

WAA AAUUU UUU...

PLEASE?!

YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO COMFORT HER.

BRING HER TO ME.

WAA AAUUU UUU...

YEAH, LIKE SHE'S GOING TO CALM DOWN WHEN SHE SEES YOUR UGLY BABOON-ASS FACE.

I KNOW YOU HAVE HEARD MUCH ABOUT CASSANDRA AND ME.

YOU MUST KNOW THAT I HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH ANGRY, TANTRUM-THROWING "CHILDREN," YES?

WAA AAUUUU UU!

JUST...JUST DO WHATEVER WILL SHUT HER UP.

WAA AAUUUU UU!

WAAAAUU UUUU...

LITTLE SANDY. IT IS YOUR UNCLE VLAD.

IT IS ALL RIGHT, LITTLE CASSANDRA. IT IS GOOD.

WOW. WHAT DO YOU KNOW? SHE ACTUALLY LIKES YOUR MUTANT FACE.

HRRRMMM.

RRAAGH!!

AHHHHH!!

CHUK

SHRRRIP

AAHH!! YOU SONOFA--

I HAVE YOU, LITTLE CASSANDRA.

AHHH, FUCK!!

YOU WILL BLEED TO DEATH VERY QUICKLY. BUT I HAVE EXPERIENCE TENDING WOUNDS.

FREE ME NOW, AND I WILL STOP THE BLEEDING.

REFUSE AND YOU WILL PASS OUT BEFORE YOU REACH HELP.

UNNNH...OH JESUS...

LOOK, LITTLE SANDY! YOUR UNCLE VLAD HAS A BIG RED SMILE, YES?

UNH... UNH... WAUUU.

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI FAIRGROUNDS.
NEAR HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI.
HEY, HEY! PEOPLE! CHILL THE HELL OUT, GUYS! IT'S JUST SODA!
STAB!
STAB!
STAB!
STAB!!
JUST SODA? GET YOUR FARTBOX OFF THE STAGE, BRO!
YOU AIN'T *IG'NANT* ENOUGH!
NOW, YOU KNOW WHO THIS BRO RIGHT HERE IS, RIGHT?
ORIN!
ORIN!
ORIN!
YEAH! *ORIN HATCHET!*
IG'NANT MIME NUMBER ONE!
AND STAB AIN'T JUST NO SODA! IT'S THE *BOMBEST!*
IT'S THE FUCKING *ELIXIR OF LIFE!!*
YOU DESERVE STAB, 'CAUSE YOU SERVE IT NOW!
IN FACT, I WANT YOU TO RUN OUT INTO THAT PARKING LOT, STAB HAPPIES...
...AND WHEN THAT TRUCK ARRIVES, I WANT YOU TO GIVE IT A REAL IG'NANT MIME SQUAD GREETING!
YES. MELT FOR YOUR ANGEL, BABY.
I WANT YOU TO TEAR THE MOTHERFUCKING DOORS OFF THAT BITCH!!
HNK.

WAAUUUU?

SANDY?!

IF YOU'VE HURT HER, YOU BASTARDS, I'LL KILL YOU. I SWEAR.

VLAD?!

WAUUUUU.

OH, VLAD. I WAS AFRAID THEY WERE GOING TO KILL YOU WHEN THEY TOOK YOU AWAY.

NO, DEAR AVA.

"IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A COUNTRY CLUB HALLOWEEN PARTY TO KILL VLAD, YES?"

YOU SHOULD TAKE LITTLE CASSANDRA.

I WILL HAVE HANDS FULL OF ALL THE OTHER WOMEN WHO--

SHUNK

AH.

IT'S YOU OR BROCK, AND NO ONE'S GONNA TAKE BROCK FROM ME.

I'M SORRY, VLAD. I REALLY AM.

URGK!

YOU STUPID BITCH!

GODDAMN IT, GERT! YOU IDIOT!!

VLAD!

NUHN...

MAENADS! BACCHANALIANS!

THE RITUAL CONTINUES! WE'VE RELEASED THE PREPARERS!

YOU AND YOUR DUMB FRIENDS ARE, LIKE, TOTALLY DE--

SKRAK

HURR?

HEY, I HAD THE GUITAR FOR A WHILE. I PICKED UP A FEW CHORDS.

THANKS FOR GETTING IT BACK FROM THOSE DICKWADS.

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI FAIRGROUNDS.

SHOOOM

WHY, DAISY! I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU.

NOW, COME ON OUT AND DIE LIKE OLD TIMES.

I MISREAD THIS SITUATION.

I DIDN'T EXPECT... *LYN.*

NNH. ME NEITHER. A LOT HARDER TO STOP A SODA DELIVERY WHEN YOU'RE GETTING LASER BLASTS THROWN AT YOU.

BUT I CAN TAKE HER.

ON YOUR OWN? ARE YOU NUTS?

KIND OF. IT'S A LONG STORY.

Mistress Cassie! Mistress Daisy! Many come to fetch their fizzy waters!

ICK. SO MANY MIMES!!

WELL, LOOKEE HERE. ***ACID ANGEL,*** I COULD KISS YOU.

I MEAN, IF THAT WASN'T SUCH A TERRIBLE IDEA.

STAB!

STAB!

STAB!

STAB!

STAB!

YOU'RE LUCKY HE'S MOSTLY FAT THERE, GERTRUDE.

HRM.

I'M SO SORRY. SO SORRY.

THEY SAID WE HAD TO CHOOSE...AND I CHOSE. I CHOSE BROCK SO FAST.

AND IT JUST MADE ME CRAZY.

I WAS SO SELFISH.

HE'S THE ONLY-- I NEVER REALLY LOVED ANYONE BEFORE.

IS THAT... IS IT SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU SELFISH?

YES.

"IT IS NOT YOU WHO IS AT FAULT. IT IS I."

I GAVE YOU ADVICE, THEN DID NOT FOLLOW IT MYSELF.

"WATCH YOUR BACK."

YES. SELFISH FOR LOVE IS GOOD...

"...IT IS WHAT SEPARATES US FROM SAMHAIN."

OH GOD. I'M SO LOST.

AH. YOU WOULD HAVE TO BE AVA.

AKAKIOS TOLD ME ABOUT YOU. THE HONORABLE SEX SLAVE. THE DIRTY ANGEL.

THE LIVING, BREATHING PERSONIFICATION OF THE HUMAN MALE'S CONTRARY DESIRES FOR THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE.

HARLOT! WHORE! SINNER!

HM. YOU'RE ALSO ABOUT TO BECOME THE PERSONIFICATION OF A HUMAN HEART...

...TORN BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

MARGARET! NOW!

WHA--?

AGHK!

SHRAK

YOUR SHTICK IS OLD, DOC.

BUT NOT AS OLD AS HIS.

FOUL TEMPTRESS!

SHRAKOOM

OH... OH N-NO. NNNGH.

YOU KILLED MY FRIENDS. BUTCHERED THEM IN THEIR SLEEP.

LEFT THEIR DAUGHTER AN ORPHAN.

I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU, TOO. YOU LIKE TO TAKE PEOPLE APART, LAYER BY LAYER.

I'LL SETTLE FOR BIG, BLOODY CHUNKS.

FREE STAB! ON THE HOUSE!!

HAPPY, HAPPY GATHERING!

STAB! SO

WOOO!

I-M-S!

I-M-S!

I-M-S!

FUCK IT. I'LL BEAT 'EM ALL SO BADLY THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO DRINK THEIR SHITTY BEVERAGE, EVEN THROUGH A STRAW.

LYN IS WAITING OUT THERE TO BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF.

SHE'LL FRY YOU BEFORE YOU GET ANYWHERE NEAR THAT TRUCK.

LOOK, I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO EXPLAIN THIS TO YOU, SINCE YOU BARELY TRUST ME AS IT IS, BUT SHE CAN'T HURT ME. NOT FOR GOOD.

JESUS! YOU'RE ONE OF THEM!

I'M NOT LIKE THEM.

YEAH, RIGHT. WHEN DID THEY TURN YOU?!

OR WERE YOU ALWAYS THIS WAY, JUST WAITING TO--?

CAT CURIO SUPER-AWESOME IDEA INTERRUPTION! I CAN GET TO THE STAGE AND STOP THIS!

IT'S SIMPLE: I TELL THEM ALL THE SODA IS POISONED BY, LIKE, THE POLICE, WHO WANT TO KILL THE PARTY.

THEY DON'T DRINK. WE CONTAIN THE INFECTION!

Observant and vigilant Pooch sees a glowing-handed, squash-faced lady.

Might this be important?

I'VE GOT HER.

DAISY! POOCH! GET CAT TO THAT STAGE!

CASSIE! EYE FOR AN EYE TIME, RIGHT?

MOVE IT, CHICK! THERE'S FREE STAB TO BE HAD!

CAT!!

POOP! I THINK WE LOST SKELE-NUN!

HEY, THE GIRL DETECTIVE!

WHEN AKAKIOS HANDED OUT ASSIGNMENTS, I PICKED YOU.

YOU'RE SO, I DUNNO, *CLEAN* THAT I JUST WANTED TO DIRTY YOU UP.

BUT NO ONE WAS SURE WHERE YOU WERE.

THANKS FOR MAKING IT SO EASY TO FIND YOU, HON.

PPSSSH

AHHGH!

ALRIGHT, CAT! GO!

AND HERE I WAS RELUCTANT TO WEAR THE UTILITY BELT.

WHAT THE HELL--?!

BEFORE HE EVER LET ME TRAIN IN FIGHTING, ALAN MADE ME STUDY CHEMISTRY.

HE USED TO SAY, "IF THERE'S ONE THING A SUPERHERO NEEDS ABOVE ALL ELSE, IT'S SCIENCE."

I TOOK SAMPLES OF THE ACID INSIDE YOU OFF ALAN'S--OFF MY DEAD FATHER'S FACE.

MUUNF...

THE SPRAY IS A NEUTRALIZER. LIKE I SAID: SCIENCE.

NOW LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT HE TAUGHT ME ABOUT FIGHTING.

THE MAZE.

FXK

HOLD STILL, JESSIE. THE LITTLE BOLTS ARE THE HARDEST TO PLAY.

OH BABY. THANK YOU. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR.

SHUT UP AND HUG ME, NEIL.

YOU MUST BE BROCK. I HAVE HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOU.

AND ALL GERT EVER DOES IS TALK ABOUT HOW WONDERFUL YOU ARE.

IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU SO MUCH FOR SAVING ME, I'D BE JEALOUS.

GERTIE!

FOR EVERYONE, THERE'S SOMEONE WHO THEY WOULD CHOOSE ABOVE ALL ELSE, VLAD.

JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT THIS WOMAN'S CHOICE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE NOT CASSIE'S.

THE BLACK LAMP MEMBERS HAVE ALL FLED, OR ARE--

WELL, IT'S JUST US.

I MUST GET TO CASSANDRA.

WE'VE *ALL* GOT TO GET TO CASSIE. SHE'S FACING AN ARMY.

SHE CAN USE ALL THE HELP SHE CAN GET.

WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW FAR WE ARE FROM THE FAIRGROUNDS.

EVEN IF WE DID, THERE'S NO BUS WAITING TO TAKE US ALL THERE.

THE GUITAR COULD DO IT. WE'D BE TRAVELING THROUGH *NEF*, BUT IT COULD GET US THERE.

THE CHORDS TO THAT SONG, "ACID WASHED," OPEN A PORTAL.

IT'S JUST...I DON'T KNOW THEM.

NOT A PROBLEM. I DO.

THE CHORDS FOR "ACID WASHED" ARE PRACTICALLY BURNED INTO MY BRAIN.

SOMEBODY GET ME A MAP. IF I KNOW WHERE THE GROUNDS ARE, I THINK I CAN GET US THERE.

AFTER WHAT YOU DID BEFORE, WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU?

HOW DO WE KNOW YOU WON'T TELEPORT US INTO THE MIDDLE OF A RIOT WHILE YOU WHISK YOURSELF AND THE MUSTACHE OFF TO SAFETY?

BECAUSE SHE WON'T.

COME. EVERYONE IS TO BE READY.

"WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT INSANITY WE WILL FACE WHEN WE GET THERE."

PASS ME A GYM SOCK ALE!

HAPPY GATHERING RULES!

DUDE, DON'T BOGART THAT FRUIT STRIPE GUM SPECIAL EDITION.

UNH. SHIT. DRANK TOO MUCH FIZZ, BRO.

THINK I'M GONNA BLOW FROM MY SPITHOLE *AND* MY FARTBOX.

UNNGH.

GLUG GLUG GLUG

HEY, YOU TWIGGY BITCH, YOU GONNA DRINK THAT?

IF YOU'RE JUST GONNA NURSE IT, PASS THAT SHIT OVER TO THIS THIRSTY MOUTH, YO!

THIRSTY.

THIRSTY.

THIRSTY.

KILL KILL KILL KILL *KILL KILL KILL!*

AHHH!!

HEY! YOU CAN'T GO BACK THERE!

OHMY GOSHIVEALWAYS WANTEDTOBEON STAGE!

POOP. THE MIC IS DEAD.

POOCH!

Yes, yes! Pooch will find the Prongs of Power that you need!

GHK.

Oh where, oh where are they, the mysterious cords that provide the miracle of electricity?

:Snf:

Aah! Dark-eyed--

THWUMP

Yipe!!

POOCH?!

NO!

WHAT'S WRONG, CATHERINE? AREN'T YOU HAPPY TO SEE YOUR *BOOGEYMAN?*

HOLD STILL. I WANT TO DO THIS RIGHT THIS TIME.

BRZAKAK

AHHHGHK!

ENOUGH!!

AH =HNH= THE INEVITABLE VLAD.

WHERE DID YOU...GET THAT THING?

I TOOK IT FROM SOMEONE IN HELL. I CAME THROUGH THERE TO REACH YOU.

I WAS A FOOL TO EVER BELIEVE YOU. YOU ARE ALWAYS THE MONSTER!!

BRZAKAK

HNNN. YOU ONCE =URGG= TOLD ME...

...CASSIE PUSHED EVERYONE...

AWAY...

...FOR FEAR OF CAUSING THEIR DEATHS.

SHUNK

AAAGHHHK!!

SO, REALLY...

...YOU HAD TO SEE THIS COMING.

TO BE CONCLUDED!

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI FAIRGROUNDS.
NEAR HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI.

STAB!
STAB!
STAB!
STAB!
WAA AAUUU UGH...

B--BUT, *SMURF BITCH*, BABY...
I LOVE YOU, GIRL...
WAA AAUUU UGH...

HHNNNH... KILL.
STAB.
STAB.
YOU CAN'T HURT ME. YOU'S MY LITTLE TUBBY TIT PHREAK.
AND IT'S THE ANNIVERSARY OF US MEETIN' YO.
WAA AAUUU UGH...

IT'S WHERE WE MADE OUR LITTLE MIRACLE, *DIAPA KILLA*.
PLEASE. YOU GOT TO THINK OF LI'L KILLA.
HNHSS... STAB.
K-K-KILL.

SPLAK
WAA AAUUU UGH!!

AH...JEEZ... J-JESUS.

GO.

GO!!

CHINK

AHHH!

WA AAAUUUU UGH!

WE'RE TOO LATE, AVA!

NO, WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP.

WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM FROM LEAVING THE GROUNDS!

VLAD RAN OFF!

WHERE'S CAS--?

OH GOD.

WHAT?

HEAR ME!

STAB! Soda

APPY GATHERING 2012

I AM AKAKIOS. THE MURDER MESSIAH.

YOUR FATHER. YOUR GOD.

WHY WON'T YOU *DIE?!*

YOU'RE FUCKING COOKED!

NGGHHH...

*THIS WORLD IS AT ITS END! WE HAVE CALLED THE **BACCHANALIANS** TO COME TO US. TO ADMIT THEIR SINS. AND THEY HAVE DENIED US!*

NAH. I'M STILL COLD IN THE CENTER.

SHOOOM

GLK!

*GO! LET THE **CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS** KNOW THAT SALVATION CAN ONLY COME FROM THE HAND OF AKAKIOS!*

THOSE WHO DENY THIS TRUTH WILL BE HARVESTED LIKE THE ANIMALS THEY ARE!

MOTHERFUUUUU--

VLAD!

*MAY THE LIGHT OF THE **BLACK FLAME** ILLUMINATE YOUR WAY!*

YOU FUCKING MADE IT, YOU WONDERFUL BADASS!

NOW LET'S DO THIS SHIT UP CASSIE AND VLAD STYLE.

VLAD?

VLAD!

NO NO... YOU HAVE TO STAND UP SO WE CAN--

VLAD?

VLAD?!

CASSIE! VLAD!

MOVE!!

MOOOOOOVE!!

KRAAOOOM

H--HE DIDN'T--

VLAD...

OH GOD. VLAD.

NO... NO!

CASSIE. I'M--

BABY--OH NO, NO.

I'M SO SORRY.

I'M SO, SO SORRY, BABY.

CASS--?

OH, GOD. CASS.

=UNH HUNH HUNH= ALL--MY--FAULT... =HUNH=

SEE HOW THE BLACK FLAME **SCOURS** THE EARTH, DEVOURING THE OLD AND SOWING THE SEEDS OF **REBIRTH?!**

SO, TOO, WILL YOU, THE **NEW PALADINS**, CLAIM THIS WORLD FOR--

SQUEE--

THE BLACK LAMP.

HMMM.

THE PATHETIC WOMAN-CHILD RETURNS.

WELL, IT APPEARS I LEFT MY KNIFE IN YOUR FRIEND VLAD.

NO MATTER.

I FIND I PREFER MY NEW METHOD OF ELIMINATING ANNOYANCES MORE SATISFYING THAN THE BLADE.

AHHH!

OH NO. DON'T BITE ME, MISTER BOGEYMAN...

...I'M EVER SO DEFENSELESS.

SPLUCK

AAAGGHHHHH!

WELL, EXCEPT FOR THAT LITTLE SYRINGE THERE.

RRRAAAGHHHH!!

IT'S FILLED WITH A LITTLE CONCOCTION OF MY OWN BREWING.

YOU MIGHT RECALL THAT I'M SOMETHING OF A CHEMIST.

I FIGURED OUT AN ANTIDOTE TO BUCK KEMP'S MIND CONTROL JUICE DOWN IN SOUTH AMERICA ALL BY MYSELF.

BLLURGHKK...

I MANAGED TO GET A SAMPLE OF YOUR BLOOD THERE, TOO. AND, WELL, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT EVIL BLACK LIQUID FOR A LONG TIME.

SINCE YOU PUT ME IN A COMA ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, REALLY.

ALL THAT THINKING EVENTUALLY LED TO A PRETTY BIG ***AH-HAH MOMENT***, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF. I FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE AN ANTIDOTE TO YOUR PANACEA.

IF YOU WEREN'T CHOKING ON YOUR OWN BLOOD, YOU'D ASK: "CAT CURIO, DO YOU MEAN YOU CREATED A CURE FOR SLASHERS?!"

WELL, YES, MISTER AKAKIOS. I THINK I DID.

SURE, IT'S NOT QUITE READY FOR PHARMACY SHELVES, WHAT WITH THE HORRIBLE SIDE EFFECTS AND ALL.

BUT REGULAR TREATMENTS SHOULD REMOVE MOST, IF NOT ALL OF THE HATEFUL URGES TO KILL TEENS AND HAPPY PEOPLE.

IT ALSO COUNTERACTS A FEW OTHER NOTABLE ASPECTS OF THE DISEASE-- LIKE THE ABILITY TO HEAL FROM ANY WOUND.

CHILD OF DIONYSUS. KILL.
KILL. STAB. STAB! STAB!!
AAAGHKK!
AIIIIGGHH!
KILL. STAB.
STA--
PWAK
SHUK
SPLOK

I SHOULD BE OUT THERE, HELPING THE GIRLS.

DON'T BE SILLY, NEIL. YOU'RE NO MORE A FIGHTER THAN I AM.

I LOVE YOU, HONEY, BUT, WELL, YOU'RE OLD.

AND A COWARD.

HM. THANKS, LINDA.

SANDY DOING OKAY THERE, JESSIE?

Y-YES. I THINK SO.

LOOK AT THAT. GUESS LITTLE ***MIZ STORM-OFF*** STORMED BACK.

DRESSED LIKE A...ZEBRA MAYBE?

I THINK SHE'S HURT...

"...AND SHE'LL BE EVEN MORE HURT REAL DAMN SOON."

SPLICK

GET IN!

YOU BEAT A GIRL WITH ACID FOR BLOOD TO A PULP, DIDN'T YOU?

FISTS *SHNH* FASTER THAN A TRIGGER FINGER.

HOW'S EVERYONE FARING?

DON'T KNOW. THERE WAS FIRE AND SO MANY OF THOSE... THINGS.

I WAS JUST RUNNING BLIND.

SHIT. I'M OLD TOO, BUT I CAN'T LEAVE GERT OUT THERE.

I'LL GO WITH YOU.

THE HELL YOU WILL. DAISY NEEDS YOU HERE. I'LL GO

YOU STAY WITH YOUR HUSBAND, MISSUS MARSH.

BE CAREFUL! THEY'RE EVERYWHERE.

DEMONS OF METAL FESTIVAL. 1986. FRANKFURT. HUNDRED SEVENTEEN THOUSAND SCREAMING METALHEADS.

IF I CAN SURVIVE THAT, I CAN SURVIVE THIS.

SPLAK

GUH... DAMN YOU.

GLLLGHK.

YOU'RE MAD, AREN'T YOU?

I MEAN, BEYOND THE SPEWING YOUR INTESTINES AND ALL.

IT REALLY BOTHERS YOU THAT ME, ***CAT CURIO, INTREPID DETECTIVE,*** MANAGED TO BEST YOU, ***AKAKIOS, MASTER ALCHEMIST.***

THE REALITY IS: YOU'RE OUTCLASSED. SURE, YOU ANCIENT GREEKS HAD DOMES AND DEMOCRACY AND PITAS.

BUT THIS IS THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

WE'VE GOT THE INTERNET AND SUPERCOLLIDERS AND THE B.M.J. CATALOG WITH ITS ***ADVANCED HOME CHEMISTRY*** SET ON SALE FOR JUST $349.99, PLUS FOUR HUNDRED BOX TOP POINTS.

YOU, MISTER AKAKIOS--SAMHAIN, BOGEYMAN--WITH ALL YOUR IDEAS ABOUT PURIFYING THE SPECIES BY PRUNING THE IMMORAL, ARE A DINOSAUR.

SO, PLEASE... DIE OUT.

Y-YOU ARE NOT A BORN KILLER. =HNGH=

NOT AN ***APEX P-PREDATOR.***

HUUGHK!

YOU HAVE NO PLACE IN MY WORLD.

THERE ARE SO MANY!

IN *LIBBY'S MESSAGE* THERE WERE MORE. THEY FILLED THE SKY, BLOTTED OUT THE SUN.

REAL COMFORTING, HONEY.

COPS AND FIREFIGHTERS.

WE HAVE TO GET THEM THE HELL OUT OF HERE. THEY'LL BE MASSACRED.

OR WE HAVE TO GET ALL THE STAB HAPPIES OUT OF HERE.

THEY'RE RUNNING ALL OVER THE GROUNDS.

HOW THE HELL WILL WE GET THEM ALL IN ONE PLACE TO USE THE GUITAR?

THIS THING'S SOME KIND OF CRAZY MAGIC WAND. BUT IT'S STILL A GUITAR, RIGHT?

THESE KIDS WANTED TO HEAR IG'NANT MIME SQUAD.

LET'S GIVE 'EM SOME.

HUNH...GHUH. WELL STRUCK, CASSANDRA.

NOT ENOUGH *=UNNGG=* TO STOP ME FROM ESCAPING...BUT A PALPABLE BEATING.

IS THAT RETRIBUTION FOR WHAT I DID TO VLAD?

YOU SHOULDN'T BE UPSET. HE WAS HOLDING YOU BACK, YOU KNOW.

KEEPING YOU FROM BEING WHAT YOU WERE ***MEANT TO BE.***

AS PART OF OUR SACRED RITUALS, WE ALLOW BACCHANALIANS TO COMPETE FOR A CHANCE TO JOIN US. FOR ONE TO PROVE WORTHY.

I ALLOWED THEM *=UHGNN=* TO GO THROUGH WITH IT.

IT'S LIKE CHRISTMAS TO THEM, AND THEY DO SO LOVE THEIR HOLIDAYS.

BUT I KNEW THE WORTHY ONE WAS ALWAYS *=HUNGH=* ***YOU.***

SHRAAA

WHY, MISTER HELLFREES. I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU KNEW ANY I.M.S.

I TRY TO KEEP UP, YOU KNOW? CONVINCE MYSELF I'M STILL RELEVANT.

GIMME SOME STEVE VAI ANY DAY. I CAN ONLY HANDLE A COUPLE MINUTES OF THIS RAP METAL SHIT.

IT'S ENOUGH. THAT'S GOT TO BE MOST OF THEM.

HERE. YOU'RE THE HEADLINER.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS CHORD WILL TAKE US.

COULDN'T CARE LESS, AS LONG AS IT'S YOU AND ME.

GEORGIA. AVA. YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO RUN FAST AND FAR. ROCK 'N' ROLL IS ABOUT TO SAVE THE WORLD.

GERT...

RUN!

THRUM

THRUM

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE, CASSIE. THIS IS YOUR DESTINY.

YOU FOUND ME. YOU FREED ME. YOU BROUGHT ME BACK.

"WE COMPLETED EACH OTHER."

THROOOOW

=HUNGH= YOU CHOSE ME CASSIE.

YOU CHOSE TO HAVE ME...INSIDE YOU.

THROOOOW

NO! MY PALADINS...

I CAN FEEL... I CAN FEEL YOUR DEATHS. NEW AND FINAL.

CASSIE! STOP THIS NOW.

IT'S JUST YOU!

THE BLACK LAMP NEEDS YOU NOW!

YOU'RE THE LAST ONE!

THE *FINAL*--

GRRRUUUHH!!

KKRAK

GNNH.

HURRRRRRRRR.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

WHU-- WHAT?

YOU FEEL ALIVE.

HNNNH!

SHARE IT WITH ME.

SHLUK

SHLUK

SHLUNK

SHLUK

SHLUNK

SHLUK

=HNH=

=HNH=

=HNH=

=HNH=

SO, I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT, *UM*, WELL, ***THAT.***

AND I GUESS YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT IN THE MOOD, SO I'LL JUST CONGRATULATE MYSELF.

"YOU CURED SAMHAIN? FOR REAL THIS TIME? TIP TOP WORK, CAT CURIO!"

UNFORTUNATELY, YOU CAN'T CURE CRAZY IN A DELUDED JERKFACE.

THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF THAT PART.

RAAAAHHH!!

I COULD SWEAR I'M SEEING SOME *BLACK FLAMES* IN HERE.

AM I GOING NUTS?

I'M JUST GONNA BLAME IT ON WHATEVER THESE KIDS WERE SMOKING STILL BEING IN THE AIR.

I'VE GOT A BUNCH OF KIDS SAYING THEIR FRIENDS ATTACKED THEM.

LOTS OF BABBLING ABOUT "BAD SODA."

AND SOMETHING ABOUT "ROMAN CHICKS."

I HAVE HOTWIRED A BUS OR TWO IN MY DAY.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD TAKE OUR LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

DEAL. FIVE MINUTES AND WE ROLL.

SHHHHH.

I'VE GOT DEAD KIDS, POISONOUS SODA, AND A CRATER WHERE THERE USED TO BE A FAIRGROUND.

ANY GODDAMN THOUGHTS, LIEUTENANT?

NO, SIR. NOT A CLUE.

THERE YOU GO. GET IT ALL OUT.

BUT AVOID MY SHOES, IF YOU WOULD.

HNNNGHK!

Oh, how delinquent Pooch does hang his head with guilt for making Mistress Cassie so ill with his sneaking and his needle to her hind end.

CASSIE WILL THANK US WHEN SHE'S DONE SPEWING.

Reluctant Pooch, so meek and faithless.

I MADE THAT SHOT SPECIAL FOR CASSIE. IT WAS OBVIOUS SHE'D EVENTUALLY GO BAD AND TRY TO KILL US ALL.

BUT, LUCKY FOR HER, I HAD AKAKIOS AS A GUINEA PIG FOR FIGURING THE PROPER DOSAGE.

CHICKAMAUGA, GEORGIA.

4:52 A.M.

YOU'VE DONE STUFF LIKE THIS BEFORE, LINDA.

IT'S ALL SO CRAZY AND HORRIBLE. SOME OF US DIDN'T MAKE IT.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE WON?

I WISH I KNEW FOR SURE.

WELL, I CAN TELL YOU THIS:

LIBBY'S LIFE. MAGGIE'S GIFT. THE MESSAGE THAT FOUND ITSELF WITHIN ME.

I DON'T SEE THAT NIGHTMARE SO CLEARLY NOW.

THE ROAD SIGNS FADE.

THERE ARE NO STAB HAPPIES ROAMING HIGHWAY 70.

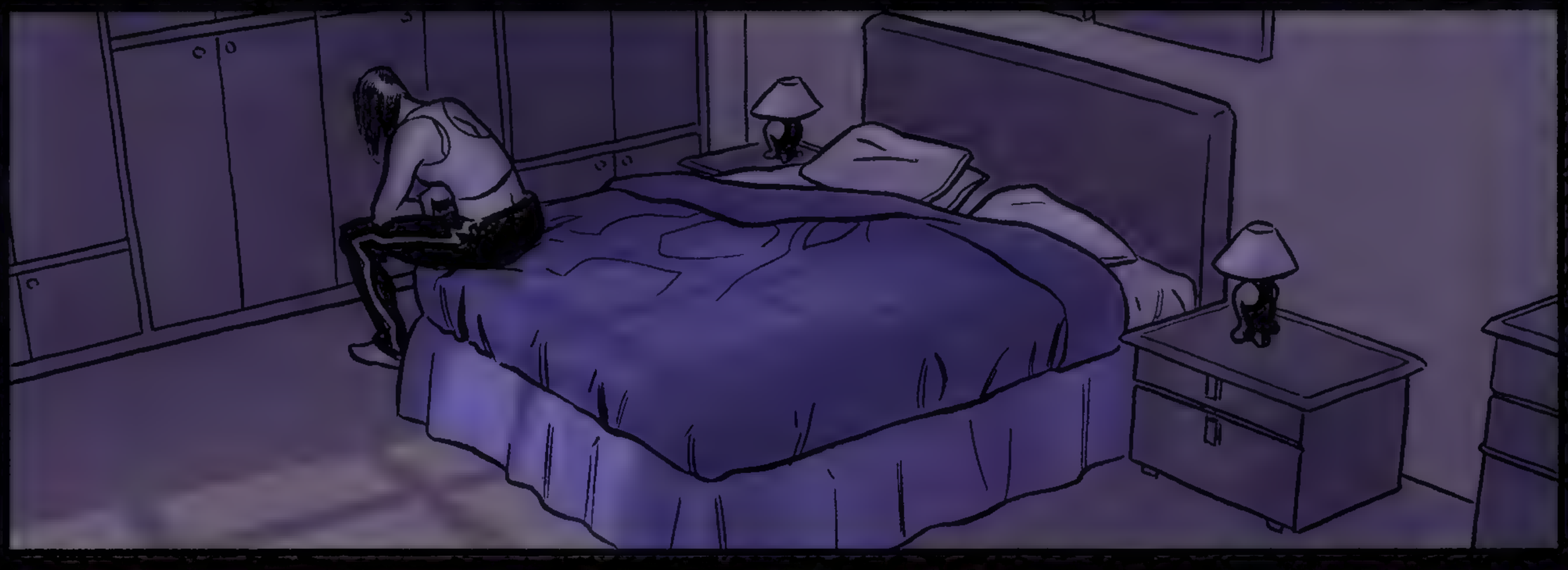
VLAD IS NO LONGER BEATEN. CAGED. BROKEN-- AS HE WAS IN THE VISION.

BECAUSE... BECAUSE HE'S DEAD.

I DON'T KNOW IF WE WON. BUT WE BEAT THE MURDER MESSIAH.

SLEEP WELL.

CLK



CASSIE.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.

YOU THINK EVERYTHING YOU'VE LIVED FOR OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS IS ALL GONE: YOUR MISSION. YOUR FEARS.

VLAD.

YOU THINK YOU'RE TOTALLY ALONE.

YOU'VE BECOME WHAT YOU HATED AND COME BACK.

THIS MIGHT SEEM LIKE A PERFECT SOLUTION: SOMEONE WHO WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.

AND THE PERFECT WAY TO PROVE THAT YOU'RE NOT YOUR MOTHER.

YOU'LL TAKE SANDRA SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY.

RAISE HER AS YOUR OWN.

BE THE MOTHER YOU NEVER HAD.

YOU PROBABLY THINK I'M GOING TO TALK YOU OUT OF IT. BUT...

I THINK YOU SHOULD.

AND I THINK YOU SHOULD TAKE ME WITH YOU, TOO.

WHAT? WHAT ABOUT JESSIE?

GONE. I IMAGINE SHE'S CATCHING A BUS BACK TO FLORIDA AS WE SPEAK.

SHE GOT ONE GOOD LOOK AT THIS... LIFE AND, WELL, I WASN'T WORTH THAT KIND OF CRAZINESS.

HER REACTION MADE ME REALIZE SOMETHING. DESPITE ALL OF IT, IN THE FACE OF ALL THIS HORROR AND BLOOD AND FEAR...

I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR MY MOM. I BLAME THEM.

AND I'M GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR GETTING BACK AT THEM.

I KEPT TELLING MYSELF I WAS DRAWN BACK INTO ALL OF THIS BECAUSE I WAS "MARKED FOR DEATH."

IT WAS ALL OUTSIDE OF MY CONTROL. THE FUTURE WAS WRITTEN.

BUT WE CHANGED THE FUTURE. I'M NOT MARKED FOR DEATH. I'M MARKED BY YOU. BY MEETING YOU. BY TOUCHING YOU.

I...

...I LOVE YOU.

NO.

WHAT?!

DON'T YOU FUCKING TELL ME THAT YOU DON'T BELIEVE SOMEONE COULD CARE ABOUT YOU.

NO...I--I BELIEVE.

VLAD. HE--GOD... HE LOVED ME. FOLLOWED ME.

DIED FOR ME.

I THOUGHT IT WAS ME. THAT I WAS INCOMPLETE.

HALF FORMED BECAUSE OF ALL THE HATE AND ANGER.

UNABLE TO FEEL ANYTHING... GOOD...FOR ANYONE.

BUT RIGHT NOW, ALL I FEEL IS REGRET.

THAT I NEVER...

HE KNEW, CASS.

YOU AND ME. SOMEWHERE OFF THE GRID. RAISING SANDY. BEST FRIENDS.

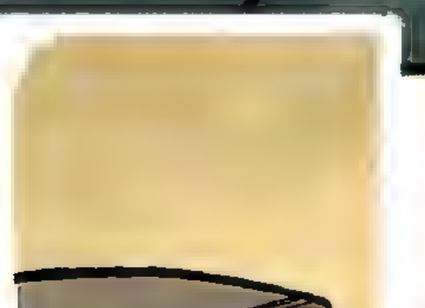
LOVERS.

LISA'S FAMILY MIGHT WANT SANDY BACK.

AND THE BLACK LAMP... THEY'RE STILL OUT THERE.

SISTER NIGHTMARE AND *SISTER SACRILEGE* ARE ALREADY ON THE LAMP'S ASS.

YOU CAN'T TALK ME OUT OF THIS.


ICAGO

THE END.

HACK/SLASH

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HACK/SLASH Deluxe Hardcover, Volume 5

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BACK/SLASH

BEFORE THE **STRANGLER**,
BEFORE THE **RIPPER**,
BEFORE THE FIRST **SCARY STORY** WAS PUT TO PAPER...

...THERE WAS **MURDER**.
HUMANITY'S **FIRST PASTIME**.

THE **MOST DANGEROUS GAME** EVER INVENTED.

AND THIS SUMMER,
CASSIE HACK'S GOING
ALL THE WAY BACK...

...TO PLAY FOR **BLOOD**.

THERE ARE NORMAL CHILDHOODS, AND THEN THERE'S **CASSIE'S** CHILDHOOD.

FOR HER, SURVIVING HIGH SCHOOL MEANT SURVIVING A **SLASHER** FOR A **MOTHER!**

BUT ONCE CASSIE GOT A TASTE OF **SURVIVAL**, SHE COULDN'T STOP. SINCE THEN...

...SHE'S BEEN AN ALL-NEW KIND OF **FINAL GIRL.**

WORKERS' RIGHTS, MASCHINENMENSCH.

THE **FINAL GIRL** SLASHERS EVER SEE.

AFTER SCIENTISTS UNEARTH A **MYSTERIOUS BURIAL CHAMBER**, **CASSIE** SMELLS A HUNT.

SHE SEES THE SIGNS--IT'S NO CRYPT FIT FOR A **KING**, IT'S A CELL BUILT FOR **KILLER**...

...THREE-THOUSAND **YEARS** IN THE **PAST**.

THE **FIRST SLASHER** IN **HISTORY**. A **LEGEND** AMONG MODERN DAY KILLERS.

A LEGEND **CASSIE** INTENDS TO **KILL**.

BECAUSE EVEN DEEP IN THE PAST, IT WASN'T SAFE TO **SNEAK AWAY**...

...NOT WITH **MONSTERS** LIKE THE **MAMMOTH** STALKING THE SHADOWS.

EVEN THEN, THERE WERE KILLERS WITH A **MAD-ON** FOR **YOUNG LOVE**... AND NO ONE TO STOP THEM.

AT LEAST NOT THE **FIRST** TIME AROUND.

SORRY I'M LATE, **MAMMOTH**...

TCHAK

...THE COMMUTE WAS MURDER.

CASSIE IS AGES AWAY FROM INDOOR PLUMBING. SHE'S NOT UP ON THE LOCAL STYLE.

AND IT'LL BE THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE ANYONE SPEAKS HER LANGUAGE.

SKDDDT

BUT SHE'S FLUENT IN BREAKING HEARTS, NOT TO MENTION HEADS.

FAR FROM HOME, CASSIE HACK IS STRANDED AT THE DAWN OF THE SERIAL KILLER.

AND THIS FINAL GIRL'S GOT NO CHOICE...

...BUT TO FIGHT HER WAY BACK.

BACK/SLASH

script: Steve Orlando
art: Steve Kurth
colors: Carlos Badilla
letters: crank!

TRAK

THE REAL ADVENTURES OF CASSIE HACK

THIS FALL, **ACTION** LIVES IN **WESTERN WISCONSIN!** BUT DON'T WORRY!

IT'S COMING TO **YOUR LIVING ROOM,** EVERY WEEKEND--ON **TOX KIDS!**

AND FOR THE **STUDENTS** AT **CARPENTER HIGH SCHOOL...**

...THERE'S A **BULLY** ON THE PROWL!

I SUFFER **EVERY DAY** IN THAT **KITCHEN** SINCE BEFORE **SUNRISE...**

...AND YOU UNGRATEFUL RUNTS CAN'T FINISH YOUR PIZZA?!

TWACK!

WE-WE'RE SORRY, **LUNCH LADY!**

BUT IT-- IT'S LIKE **PLASTIC!**

PLASTIC?! THAT'S MY **FAMILY RECIPE,** TWERP!

AND **YOU BRATS** ARE ABOUT TO SEE WHERE OUR **SPECIAL RED SAUCE** COMES FROM--

NOT SO FAST, LADY!

YOU!

IT'S **CASSIE HACK** AND HER BEST FRIEND, **VLAD!**

THEY'RE CARPENTER HIGH SCHOOL'S **STRANGEST** STUDENTS!

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO **FIGHTING BULLIES...**

CASSANDRA HACK! YOU SHOULD BE IN **DETENTION,** YOUNG LADY!

AND **YOU WILL BE**--AFTER **EACH OF THESE WORMS** EATS THEIR PIZZA AND LIKES IT!

BOOM!

I DON'T THINK SO!

READY, VLAD?

... THEY'RE CARPENTER HIGH'S **BIGGEST HEROES!**

BULLYING IS WRONG! CASSIE AND VLAD KNOW THAT ALL TOO WELL!

ONE'S AN ORPHAN, AND THE OTHER'S THE BIG MEATY NEW KID FROM CHICAGO!

THIS LUNCH IS CANCELED!

NO ONE STOOD UP FOR THEM, SO THEY STARTED STANDING UP FOR THEMSELVES--AND EVERYONE ELSE!

AND NOW, CARPENTER ISN'T JUST A HIGH SCHOOL. WHEN A BULLY COMES AROUND..

...IT'S A BATTLEFIELD!

KREEEK

BUT CASSIE AND VLAD AREN'T ALONE IN THE FIGHT! THEY'VE GOT VLAD'S PARENTS...

...WHO TOOK CASSIE IN AFTER HER FATHER'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

CARPENTER HIGH MIGHT BE A HOT SPOT FOR BULLIES, BUT CASSIE AND VLAD KNOW THE TRUTH!

YEAH!!

WOO!!

THERE'S NOTHING THOSE CREEPS FEAR MORE THAN SOMEONE WHO'S NOT AFRAID OF THEM!

FFFFWAP!

BULLIES BEWARE!

FOR ALL THE **LUNCH MONEY** STOLEN, FOR EVERY **PUTDOWN**, FOR EVERY KID **STUFFED IN A LOCKER**...

...THERE WILL BE A **RECKONING!** CASSIE AND VLAD ARE ON THE **JOB!**

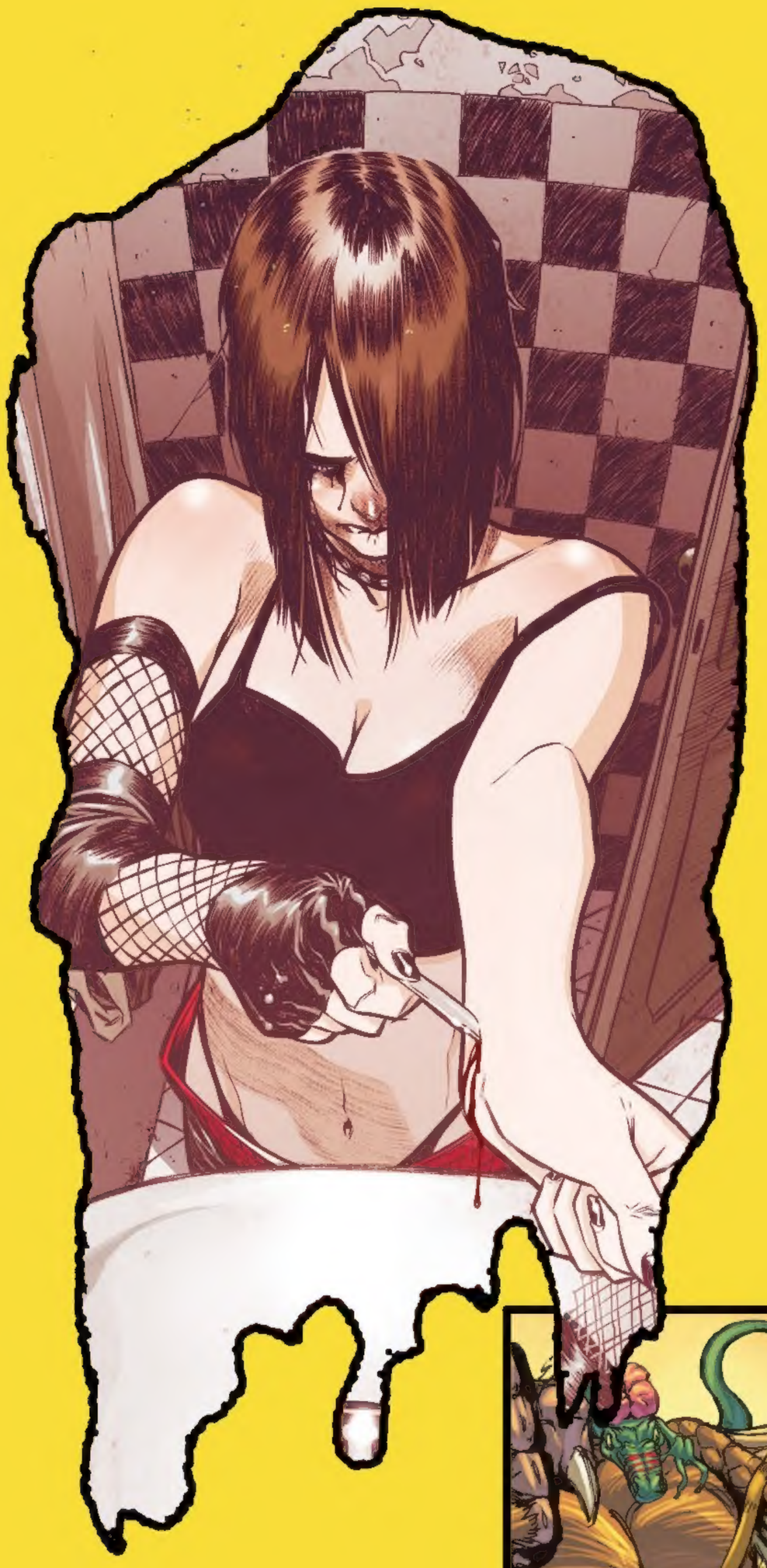
THE **WORLD'S MEANEST** BETTER WATCH OUT! BECAUSE THEY'RE **NEXT UP**...

ROAR!

HACK/SLASH

THE REAL ADVENTURES OF CASSIE HACK!

...ON THE REAL ADVENTURES OF CASSIE HACK!



ALL BAD THINGS COME TO THEIR END.

When Cassie Hack discovers a potential cure for slashers, she accidentally kickstarts a chain of events that will lead to the ultimate betrayal at the hands of a man she thought she could trust! Giant monsters, Vlad's man-eating family, the secret life of Cat Curio, and the grand finale showdown that fans have waited years to see!

This *Hack/Slash* deluxe edition collects *Mercy Sparks: A Slice of Hell* and issues #12-25 of the ongoing *Hack/Slash* Image Comics series, including guest stories by writers Justin Jordan (*Luther Strode*), Steve Seeley and Michael Moreci (*Barbaric*). Also includes two brand-new bonus stories by acclaimed writer Steve Orlando with artists Steve Kurth and Maddie Helland!

PATTON OSWALT, beloved comedian and writer (*Minor Threats*), says *Hack/Slash* is "a 1980s throwback-to-the-good-old-days-of-slasherdom that is eerily (and hilariously) prescient to our times. Can't get enough of this book!"

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